

Navadha-Bhakti

[Nine-fold Devotion]



Jaydayal Goyandka

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त्वमेव	माता	च	पिता	त्वमेव
त्वमेव	बन्धुश्च		सखा	त्वमेव ।
त्वमेव	विद्या		द्रविणं	त्वमेव
त्वमेव	सर्वं	मम		देवदेव ॥

tvameva	mātā	ca	pitā	tvameva
tvameva	bandhuśca	sakhā		tvameva
tvameva	vidyā	draviṇaṁ		tvameva
tvameva	sarvaṁ	mama		devadeva

It is You; the mother and father both,
 It is You; the brother and friend both,
 It is You; the knowledge and riches both,
 It is You; all in all, O my Lord.

Jaydayal Goyandka

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II Om Shri Parmatmane Namah II

After going through the Shastras and listening to the words of the foremost men I have come to the conclusion that there is no other book more useful than Shrimad Bhagavad Gita for the social welfare. The practice of anyone of the philosophy of knowledge, philosophy of Yoga, philosophy of action, the Yoga of devotion etc., whatsoever the practice of spiritual exercises have been mentioned in the Gita with faith, interest and according to his competency, can do good to the mankind.

So, to know the essential secret of the spiritual practice as well as the Supreme Lord; making the best and special effort with great reverence and love to get the company of the outstanding persons, in case of their absence the foremost devotees of hard penance, the whole hearted effort should be made to ponder over the Gita with its meaning and sense and to shape the conduct accordingly to make the life worthwhile.

—Jaydayal Goyandaka

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Navadha-Bhakti

It is only the principle of devotion which is easily accessible to everyone and which is the right of every man. Specially, in the Kaliyuga there is no other easy means at all except devotion for the redemption; because in the present time it is very difficult to accomplish the principle of knowledge, Yoga, penance, sacrifice with philanthropic motive etc., and nowadays it is difficult even to find its complementary requisites and proper means also. So man should be bent upon to be earnest for the principle of devotion. If it is taken with thoughtful consideration, it is found that nowadays, mostly the moral persons having faith in religion, prefer the Lord-devotion. Now, it is the matter of consideration for us as what is the Lord and what is His devotion? We must realize the God, who is the ruler of the entire universe, who is omniscient, omnipotent, indweller of everybody's heart, whose law is justice and moral conduct, who is the witness of all and who is the giver of learning, wisdom and knowledge to all and who in spite of being beyond all the three modes of Prakriti, is the enjoyer of three Gunas. The three modes of Prakriti for play sake, whose devotion purifies the man to the highest purity and relieves him from the demerits, immoral conduct and miseries, who manifests Himself in divine, human etc., all the forms from time to time through His sportive display, despite being unmanifest only to show His mercy to the living beings for their good and for the preaching of religion and to bestow His shelter to His devotees, rather to say that

He delights His devotees by blessing them with His direct vision according to their will appearing in the manifested form and who had appeared in the form of Shri Hari in Satyayuga, as Shri Ram in 'Tretayuga' as Shri Krishna in 'Dwaparyuga'. Loving eternal imperishable embodiment of truth, consciousness and bliss, omnipresent that supreme being should be known as God.

Now, 'what is devotion' is the main point of discussion. The foremost sage Sandilya has said—'सा परानुरक्तिरीश्वरे' 'The exclusive love for God is devotion'.

The sage Narad has also mentioned in his 'Bhakti Sutra'—'सा त्वस्मिन् परमप्रेमरूपा' II 2 II 'The extreme love in the Lord is devotion'. 'अमृतस्वरूपा च' II 3 II 'And that is the nectar'.

Such kinds of more other versions are also worthnoting. On the basis of these versions it is the conclusion that the love to the Lord only is nectar and that is the real devotion. If to say according to the grammar 'Bhakti' means service; because the word 'Bhakti' is derived from the verbal root—'Bhaj Sewayam', it is also appropriate to say. Love is the fruit of service and the last limit of the principle of Lord's devotion. As the tree has its worth and perfectness only when it bears fruit, in the same way the glory and accomplishment of devotion is in the supreme love in the Lord. Love is its climax and service is performed for the accomplishment of love. So, as a fact, the exclusive love in the Lord is 'Bhakti'.

Although, the right of every living being in the devotion of the Lord is justified, because Hanuman, Jambavant, Gajendra, Garuda, Kakbhushundi and Jatayu etc., all the animals and birds of Tretayuga have attained supreme abode by the virtue of Lord's devotion but being

bereft of knowledge and practice of spiritual exercise among the animals and birds etc., other than mankind fail to secure devotion to the Lord—so the authors of Shastras mention that only a human being is entitled to attain devotion.

In the devotion of the Lord age and appearance have no meaning. Knowledge, wealth, caste and vigour are not important and the Lord does not give much importance to even moral conduct and merits,—In His consideration it is only the Love that counts. Any poet has said also—

व्याधस्याचरणं ध्रुवस्य च वयो विद्या गजेन्द्रस्य का
का जातिर्विदुरस्य यादवपतेरुग्रस्य किं पौरुषम्।
कुब्जायाः कमनीयरूपमधिकं किं तत्सुदाम्नो धनं
भक्त्या तुष्यति केवलं न च गुणैर्भक्तिप्रियो माधवः ॥

‘What was the morality in the conduct of the hunter? Actually, what was the age of Dhruv? What was the knowledge in Gajendra? What was the pedigree of Vidur? What prowess had the Lord of Yadavas, Ugrasen? What was such a matchless charm in Kubja? What was such a plenty of wealth with Sudama? The devotion-loving Madhav is satisfied only with devotion and not with virtues and merits.’

The devotee is endowed with moral conduct and virtues in the natural way by the influence of devotion, so the moral conduct and virtues don’t have so much importance in the devotion of the Lord, but it should not be misunderstood that there is no need of moral conduct and virtues at all in the devotion of the Lord. For example, a patient of any disease has the main importance of the medicine to be cured from the disease but side by side the regulated diet is also very important, similarly for the

cure of the worldly disease of life and death, the devotion of the Lord is the best medicine and the moral conduct and virtues are the diet supplement. For the cure of the worldly disease if the patient does not pay attention towards the regulated diet, despite taking the medicine, generally, he is not cured of the disease but a little lackness in his moral conduct and noble merits, he is cured of the worldly disease by taking the medicine of devotion; because the medicine of devotion does the work of regulated diet also. Not only this but the devotion of the Lord generates the creation of the diet of meritorious qualities and noble conduct also having rooted out different kinds of demerits and vices as obstacles and finally roots out the disease forever. So, the devotion to the Lord is the supreme medicine.

There are mainly two kinds of devotion—First the devotion as means which has been named as ‘Ninefold devotion’ (Navadha Bhakti) and ‘Vaidh-Bhakti’ also and the second is the form of accomplishment which has been called by the name of Prema-Premlakshana etc. Here in this devotion ‘Navadha’ is in the form of the means and love is the goal to be achieved.

Now, it requires to be thought over what is the ‘Vaidh-Bhakti’. Only this much can be said in its answer that to act upon the will of the Lord with the attitude that may please Him, is called the ‘Vaidh-Bhakti’. In the Shastras there are its different characteristics mentioned.

In the ‘Ramayan’ written by Tulasidasji, Shri Ramchandraji tells to Shabari—

प्रथम भगति संतन्ह कर संग। दूसरि रति मम कथा प्रसंगा॥
 गुर पद पंकज सेवा तीसरि भगति अमान।
 चौथि भगति मम गुन गन करइ कपट तजि गान॥

मंत्र जाप मम दृढ़ बिस्वासा । पंचम भजन सो बेद प्रकासा ॥
 छठ दम सील बिरति बहु करमा । निरत निरंतर सज्जन धरमा ॥
 सातवँ सम मोहि मय जग देखा । मोतें संत अधिक करि लेखा ॥
 आठवँ जथालाभ संतोषा । सपनेहुँ नहि देखइ परदोषा ॥
 नवम सरल सब सन छलहीना । मम भरोस हियँ हरष न दीना ॥

‘The first in order is association with the saints and the second is marked by a fondness for the episodes of My sports (Lila).

Humble service of the lotus feet of one’s preceptor is the third form of Devotion, while the fourth type of Devotion consists in singing My glories with a guileless heart.

Repeating My ‘Ram Nam’ (Ram formula, मंत्र) with unwavering faith constitutes the fifth form of adoration revealed in the Vedas. The sixth variety consists in the practice of self-control and virtue, desisting from manifold activities and ever pursuing the course of conduct prescribed for saints. The seventh type is he who sees the world full of Me, without distinction, and reckons the saints as even greater than Myself. He who remains contented with whatever he gets and never thinks of detecting others’ faults, cultivates the eighth type of Devotion. The ninth form of Devotion demands that one should be guileless and straight in one’s dealings with everyone, and should in his heart cherish implicit faith in Me without either exultation or depression.

And in Shrimad Bhagavat also Prahladjī has said—

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम् ।
 अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् ॥

(7/5/23)

‘To hear the names, praises and stories of Lord Vishnu and chant them, to remember Him (as well as

His names and stories), to wait upon Him, to offer worship and salutation to Him, to dedicate one's actions to Him, to cultivate friendship with Him—These are the nine kinds of devotion.'

Thus, in the Shastras different kinds of devotion and different characteristics have been stated; but after minute observation there is no difference in the principle. Generally all have the same intent that to serve and perform the conduct with the attitude that may satisfy Him and to act upon His will, is the service or Devotion.

Now a bird's eye view is being presented about the nine kinds of Devotion, its scope, guideline, purpose, cause, fruit and examples as mentioned by Prahlad in Shrimad Bhagavat. The man who follows even anyone kind out of nine kinds of Devotion with full dedication whole heartedly, attains the supreme abode; and he who follows all the nine kinds properly, there is no doubt about his redemption.



Listening

To listen to the nectar of fables of the Lord's Name, form, attributes, influence, manifold activities and mystery as related by beloved devotees of God with love and faith and to be charmed with the love of the Lord like the deer charmed with the sound of lyre; is the form of Devotion.

For the attainment of the above mentioned 'Listening-Devotion' to make effort earnestly, to salute the high-souled persons with whole body lying flat with reverence and love and to serve them and to question with guileless heart regularly and to make effort to shape the conduct as mentioned by them, is the method of attaining Devotion by hearing. The Lord has said in the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita—

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

(4/34)

'Understand the true nature of that Knowledge by approaching illumined soul. If you prostrate at their feet, render them service, and question them with an open and guileless heart, those wise seers of Truth will instruct you in that Knowledge.'

After the accomplishment of the Devotion by hearing as mentioned by the preceptors to preach it among the Lord-devotees for the exclusive love in the Lord—this is its purpose.

This listening Devotion is difficult to achieve without the company of the exalted souls. Goswami Tulasidasji has also said—

बिनु सतसंग न हरिकथा तेहि बिनु मोह न भाग।
मोह गएँ बिनु राम पद होइ न दृढ़ अनुराग॥

‘Except in the company of saints nowhere there is talk of Shri Hari (Satsang), and one cannot be rid of delusion except through such talk. And till one’s delusion is removed, one cannot have deep-rooted affection for Shri Ram’s feet.’

But in the absence of the association of the exalted souls, the company of the advanced devotees of the highest category and to go through the volumes written by great men is equally the same as ‘Satsang’.

Without ‘Satsang’ the attachment to the worldly enjoyments is but natural. That is the cause of man’s downfall and by the ‘Satsang’ there is the apparent highest gain; because the company has a great impact on man and the Devotion with hearing is also achieved by ‘Satsang’; because it is only ‘Satsang’ the cause of audible Devotion. Even the vicious man is purified in the company of great souls with their view, speech, touch, contemplation and association. Without the grace of the great souls none can attain the Supreme abode.

In Shrimad Bhagavat, Mahatma Jad Bharat says about the king Rahugan that—

रहूगणैतत्तपसा न याति
न चेज्यया निर्वपणाद् गृहाद्वा।
नच्छन्दसा नैव जलाग्निसूर्यै—
विना महत्पादरजोऽभिषेकम्॥

(5/12/12)

‘O Rahugan, one does not attain this consciousness through asceticism nor through Vedic rituals, nor again by dealing out food and other necessities among the

needy, nor by duly performing one's religious duties pertaining to household life such as entertaining an unexpected visitor, service of the afflicted and poor and so on, nor through a proper study of the Vedas nor through the worship of the gods presiding over water, fire and the sun, nor by any other means except by sprinkling one's body with the dust of feet of exalted souls.'

So, it proves that all the actions are accomplished by the company of great men. In the Shrimad Bhagavat, the Lord says to Uddhava—

यथोपश्रयमाणस्य भगवन्तं विभावसुम् ।
शीतं भयं तमोऽप्येति साधून् संसेवतस्तथा ॥

(11/26/31)

'O Uddhav! Even as cold, dismay and darkness disappear in the case of a man who betakes himself to the glorious Agni (the god of fire), so do the rigidity and obtuseness, born of stern devotion to duty, the fear of future births and its root, ignorance, get dissolved in the case of the man who renders loving service to pious souls.'

अन्नं हि प्राणिनां प्राण आर्तानां शरणं त्वहम् ।
धर्मो वित्तं नृणां प्रेत्य सन्तोऽर्वाग् बिभ्यतोऽरणम् ॥

(11/26/ 33)

'Just as food is life itself to those that breathe, as I am the only shelter to the afflicted, and even as piety is the only wealth for men to depend upon in the other world after death, so saints are the only resort to him who is afraid of being born again and again on this mortal plane.'

न रोधयति मां योगो न सांख्यं धर्म एव च ।
न स्वाध्यायस्तपस्त्यागो नेष्टापूर्तं न दक्षिणा ॥

व्रतानि यज्ञश्छन्दांसि तीर्थानि नियमा यमाः ।
यथावरुन्धे सत्संगः सर्वसंगापहो हि माम् ॥

(11/12/1-2)

The glorious Lord began again: ‘Neither Yoga (consisting of eight limbs enumerated in the Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali) nor Sankhya (knowledge of the distinctive character of the different categories discussed in the Sankhya system of philosophy) nor righteousness consisting of non-violence, benevolence etc., study of the Vedas or Japa of the Divine Name, austerity and renunciation nor pouring oblations into the sacred fire and works of public utility such as the digging of wells and tanks and the laying out of gardens nor the bestowal of gifts, observing fasts, worship of gods, muttering secret spells, resorting to holy waters and places of pilgrimage, undertaking sacred observances such as purity of body and mind and the five forms of self-abnegation (non-violence etc.,) gain Me over as does Satsang capture Me—Satsang, which actually puts an end to all other attachments.’

The foremost sage Naradji also says—

‘महत्संगस्तु दुर्लभोऽगम्योऽमोघश्च ।’ (Narad Sutra 39)

‘The association of the exalted souls is scarce, inaccessible and infallible.’

‘तदेव साध्यताम्, तदेव साध्यताम् ।’ (Narad Sutra 42)

‘Practise the company of nobles, it means to serve, accompany and act upon the commands of the saints—the great exalted persons.’

Even by the audible-Devotion thus, obtained from the perfect persons, man can attain the Supreme abode—this is its fruit. The Lord has said in Shrimad Bhagavad Gita that—

अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते ।
तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥

(13/25)

‘Other dull-witted persons, however, not knowing thus, worship even as they have heard from others (i.e., the Knowers of truth); and even they who are thus, devoted to what they have heard, are able to cross the ocean of mundane existence in the shape of death.’

Naradji, too, has said about Sanakadik in Shrimad Bhagavat Mahatmya—

श्रवणं सर्वधर्मेभ्यो वरं मन्ये तपोधनाः ।
वैकुण्ठस्थो यतः कृष्णः श्रवणाद् यस्य लभ्यते ॥

(6/76)

‘I account the hearing of Shrimad Bhagavat as the best of all righteous courses, O sages rich in askesis! For through the hearing of it is attained Shri Krishna who dwells in Vaikuntha.’

Only by the audible Devotion the Lord is attained. There are so many proofs also in the Shastras and there are available so many examples in the Purans and History also. As the king Parikshit got the supreme abode only by hearing the Bhagvat. It is mentioned in the Shrimad Bhagavat Mahatmya—

असारे संसारे विषयविषसंगाकुलधियः
क्षणार्द्धं क्षेमार्थं पिबत शुकगाथातुलसुधाम् ।
किमर्थं व्यर्थं भो ब्रजत कुपथे कुत्सितकथे
परीक्षितसाक्षी यच्छ्रवणगतमुक्त्युक्तिकथने ॥

(6/100)

‘O men, whose mind is agitated through attachment to the poison-like pleasures of sense ! Drink the peerless nectar in the form of Shrimad Bhagavat (the story

narrated by Shri Shuk) for your (spiritual) good even for half a second in this unsubstantial world. Why wander for nothing, O friends! on the wrong path resonant with vicious talks? Emperor Parikshit stands as a witness to corroborate the statement (found in our sacred-books) that Mukti (emancipation) follows in the wake of Shrimad Bhagavat entering the very ears.'

The wicked and evil doer like Dhundhukari even got salvation only by the influence of hearing the praise and virtues of the Lord and many sages like Shaunak etc., also used to pass their time in hearing the history and Puran—they never felt repleted.

For this human life there is nothing more delightful audible subject than hearing the virtues of God and this is achieved in the company of the great souls. So, there is no other object in this world so delightful and useful like the company of the noble persons for the mankind. Sutji says in the Shrimad Bhagavat—

तुलयाम लवेनापि न स्वर्गं नापुनर्भवम् ।
भगवत्संगिसंगस्य मर्त्यानां किमुताशिषः ॥

(1/18/13)

“We cannot compare with a moment’s fellowship of loving devotees of the Lord either heavenly bliss or even final beatitude (the cessation of birth and death) much less the enjoyments sought after by mortal men.”

So, we should engage our whole life in the regular hearing of the nectar of the fables of the Lord’s Name, appearance, merits, love, influence, manifold activities, abode, mystery and essence accompanying the great noble men and while hearing, being charmed in the love and joy we should make our human life fruitful.

Congregational singing

By the repeated pronunciation of the Lord's Name, form, attributes, glory, character, essence and mystery with love and faith, the horripilation in the body, choking of the throat, fall of tears, exhilaration in the heart, being charmed etc., is the form of the Devotion of congregational singing.

To relate the glory and love of the Lord before the devotees through the fables and speeches sitting in a secluded place or in the company with others to mutter His name or singing loudly in His praise having the image of the Lord in the mind, to pronounce the Lord's attributes, glory and character etc., with faith and love in mild tone or loudly either sitting or standing with or without musical instruments and to make prayer with the hymns in the praise of the Lord, these are the kinds to attain the above mentioned Devotion. But all these actions should be natural with the pure intention being free from ostentation escaping from the ten evils by name.*

Having achieved the Devotion of Congregational singing to chant divine names so that all people by cultivating divine love may attain God.

The Devotion of Congregational singing is also got by the grace of the Lord and great souls only. So in this

* सन्निन्दासति नामवैभवकथा श्रीशेषयोर्भेदधी-
रश्रद्धा श्रुतिशास्त्रदैशिकगिरां नाम्यर्थवादभ्रमः ।
नामास्तीति निषिद्धवृत्तिविहितत्यागो हि धर्मान्तरैः
साम्यं नाम्नि जपे शिवस्य च हरेर्नामापराधा दश ॥

‘To condemn the virtuous persons, to praise the glory of Name among the unfaithful persons, to differentiate the Lord Vishnu and the Lord Shiv, distrust in the Vedas, Shastras and the preceptors words, the doubt in the significance of the Lord's Name means that

matter their grace only is the factor, because by hearing the Lord's love, glory, essence and secret from the mouths of the Lord's devotees and reading the Shastras, the love and faith develops towards the Lord and then, the man can achieve the above Devotion of congregational singing. To be blessed with the grace of the Lord and His devotees, one should abide by their behests.

Thus, only by the Devotion of such congregational singing also, by the mercy of the Lord and with exclusive love in Him, man can achieve Him. In the Gita, the Lord has said—

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥
क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।
कौन्तेय प्रति जानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥

(9/30-31)

‘Even if the vilest sinner worships Me with exclusive devotion, he should be reckoned a saint, for he has rightly resolved. (He is positive in his belief that there is nothing like devoted worship of God). Speedily he becomes virtuous and attains lasting peace. Know it for certain, Arjun, that My devotee never suffers a fall.’

Not only this, the preacher of the Devotion of congregational singing is the dearest to the Lord. The Lord, Himself has said in the Gita—

य इमं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।
भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥

this is only its extolment, the sacrifice of enjoined and conduct of forbidden, the compassion of the Name with the other morals or the comparison of the Name with the ordained duties of the Shastras—these are the ten crimes by name while the muttering of the names of Lord Shiv and Vishnu.’

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृत्तमः ।
भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥

(18/68-69)

‘He who, offering the highest love to Me, preaches the most profound gospel of the Gita among My devotees, shall come to Me alone; there is no doubt about it. Among men there is none who does Me a more loving service than he; nor shall anyone be dearer to Me in the entire world than he.’ This is the fruit of this Devotion of congregational singing.

In the Bhagavat and Ramayan etc., all the devotional books, it has been mentioned that by the congregational singing of the Lord’s Name and virtues all the sins are destroyed and the Lord is attained. In the Shrimad Bhagavat it has been said—

ब्रह्महा पितृहा गोघ्नो मातृहाऽऽचार्यहाघवान् ।
श्वादः पुल्कसको वापि शुद्धयेरन् यस्य कीर्तनात् ॥

(6/13/8)

‘Through the (very) utterance of His Name the murderer of a Brahman, the slaughterer of a cow, the slayer of one’s father, mother or preceptor and any other sinner, (nay,) one who eats the flesh of a dog and even a man of sinful birth are purified (at once).’

संकीर्त्यमानो	भगवाननन्तः
श्रुतानुभावो	व्यसनं हि पुंसाम् ।
प्रविश्य चित्तं	विधुनोत्यशेषं
यथा	तमोऽर्कोऽभ्रमिवातिवातः ॥

(Shrimadbha. 12/12/47)

‘Entering the mind of men even while His name or praise is being loudly chanted or when His glory is heard of by them, the infinite Lord, the wise declare, puts an end to all their misfortune in the same way as the sun

dispels darkness and a tempestuous gale disperses the clouds.'

आपन्नः संसृतिं घोरां यन्नाम विवशो गृणन्।
ततः सद्यो विमुच्येत यद्विभेति स्वयं भयम्॥

(Shrimadbha. 1/1/14)

'Anyone who has fallen into the terrible whirlpool of birth and death can be speedily delivered from the same if he utters His Name even helplessly; for Fear itself is afraid of the Lord.'

कलेर्दोषनिधे राजन्नस्ति ह्येको महान् गुणः।
कीर्तनादेव कृष्णस्य मुक्तसंगः परं व्रजेत्॥

(Shrimadbha. 12/3/51)

'Indeed there is one great virtue possessed by the Kali age, the repository of all evils, O Parikshit ! By merely chanting the names and glories of Shri Krishna one is freed from all attachments and reaches the Supreme.'

इत्थं हरेर्भगवतो रुचिरावतार-
वीर्याणि बालचरितानि च शन्तमानि।
अन्यत्र चेह च श्रुतानि गृणन् मनुष्यो
भक्तिं परां परमहंसगतौ लभेत॥

(Shrimadbha. 11/31/28)

'A man recounting as aforesaid the most auspicious infantile and other sports of Lord Vishnu heard of here in Shrimad Bhagavata as well as in other scriptures bids fair to attain supreme devotion to Shri Krishna the goal of the ascetics of the highest order.'

अहो बत श्वपचोऽतो गरीयान्
यज्जिह्वाग्रे वर्तते नाम तुभ्यम्।
तेपुस्तपस्ते जुहुवुः सस्नुरार्या
ब्रह्मानूचुर्नाम गृणन्ति ये ते॥

(Shrimadbha. 3/33/7)

'Oh, how wonderful that even a pariah (who cooks the flesh of dogs) becomes highly venerable only because

he has Your name on the tip of his tongue ! Nay, they who utter Your name have (thereby or in their previous life) practised austere penance, poured oblations into the sacred fire, bathed (in sacred waters), conducted themselves well, and even recited the Vedas.'

In the 'Ramcharitmanas', Goswami Tulasidasji has mentioned the glory of the Name-muttering—

नामु सप्रेम जपत अनयासा । भगत होहिं मुद मंगल बासा ॥
नामु जपत प्रभु कीन्ह प्रसादू । भगत सिरोमनि भे प्रह्लादू ॥
सुमिरि पवनसुत पावन नामू । अपने बस करि राखे रामू ॥
चहुँ जुग तीनि काल तिहुँ लोका । भए नाम जपि जीव बिसोका ॥
कहाँ कहाँ लगि नाम बड़ाई । रामु न सकहिं नाम गुन गाई ॥

'By fondly repeating His Name, on the other hand, devotees easily become abodes of joy and blessings. It was because of his repeating the Name that the Lord showered His grace on Prahlada, who thereby became the crest-jewel of devotees. For his remembrance of the holy Name, Hanuman enjoys the bliss of his closeness with Shri Ram. Not only in this Kali age, but in all the four ages, at all times (past, present and future) and in all the three spheres (viz., heaven, earth and the subterranean region) creatures have been rid of their grief by repeating the Name. I have no words to depict the glory of the Name: not even Ram can adequately glorify It.'

The great sage Patanjali also says—

‘तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः ।’ (Yoga. 1/27)

The Name of the Supreme Lord is 'Onkar'.

‘तज्जपस्तदर्थभावनम् ।’ (Yoga. 1/28)

'To mutter the Name of the Supreme Lord and the feeling of its meaning means the contemplation of His form.'

‘ततः प्रत्यक्चेतनाधिगमोऽप्यन्तरायाभावश्च ।’

(Yoga. 1/29)

‘By the above mentioned practice all the hindrances are destroyed and the Lord is also attained.’ In the Narad Puran also it is mentioned—

हरेर्नाम हरेर्नाम हरेर्नामैव केवलम् ।
कलौ नास्त्येव नास्त्येव नास्त्येव गतिरन्यथा ॥

(1/41/115)

‘In ‘Kaliyuga’, it is only the Name of Shri Hari as the supreme means of highest good, except this there is no other way at all’. Thus, in the Shastras there are many other proofs also.

By this devotion of congregational singing there were so many in the age past who have got salvation. There are several examples also found in the History, Puranas and Ramayan.

By the virtue of the congregational singing of the Lord’s Name and virtues, Narad, Valmiki, Shukdev in the ancient time, Gaurang Mahaprabhu, Tulasidas, Surdas, Nanak, Tukaram, Narasi, Mirabai etc., in the recent time several devotees have attained the supreme abode. The history of their life is famous. Do leave the matter of supreme devotees, even those who were great sinners, have also got salvation. Goswami Tulasidas has said—
अपतु अजामिलु गजु गनिकाऊ । भए मुकुत हरि नाम प्रभाऊ ॥

‘Even the vile Ajamil, the celebrated elephant and the harlot of the legend were liberated by the power of Shri Hari’s name.’

So, as the hawk Cuckoo (Papiha) calls Pi-Pi for the water to see the clouds in the sky, similarly for the deepest love in the Lord and for His attainment, the whole hearted constant regular earnest effort should be made for the congregational singing of the Lord’s Name and attributes.

Remembrance

The nectareal stories of divine Name, form, virtues, glory, sports, Tattva and secrets each have been heard and read with love and faith, to contemplate on their and while contemplating being oblivious, of body consciousness to get absorbed in God just like Dhruva is remembrance-devotion.

As far as possible, in any secluded holy place sitting comfortably on a simple seat with the detached sense organs from the sensuousness, having given up desire and resolve with the peaceful mind and renounced intent or while moving, sitting and standing, eating, drinking, sleeping, performing all the actions also with natural simple and pious attitude, being savant of the Lord's forms with attributes and attributeless* and the essence of His

* This is also one of the ways to meditate the manifested form of the Lord with attributes—

समं प्रशान्तं सुमुखं दीर्घचारुचतुर्भुजम् ।
सुचारुसुन्दरग्रीवं सुकपोलं शुचिस्मितम् ॥
समानकर्णविन्यस्तस्फुरन्मकरकुण्डलम् ।
हेमाम्बरं घनश्यामं श्रीवत्सश्रीनिकेतनम् ॥
शङ्खचक्रगदापद्मवनमालाविभूषितम् ।
नूपुरैर्विलसत्पादं कौस्तुभप्रभया युतम् ॥
द्युमत्किरीटकटककटिसूत्राङ्गदायुतम् ।
सर्वाङ्गसुन्दरं हृद्यं प्रसादसुमुखेक्षणम् ।
सुकुमारमभिध्यायेत्सर्वाङ्गेषु मनो दधत् ॥

(11/14/38—41)

manifested form with attributes and formless beyond attributes to contemplate the form of the Lord with His virtues and glory to remember the Name of the Lord in mind to be charmed with the manifold activities of the Lord to remember them and to know the essence and mystery of the Lord to ponder over His attributes and glories and to pray with divine hymns and eulogy of a god, are so many ways of remembering the Lord, mentioned in the scriptures thus.

By the exclusive love in the Lord to attain Him is its purpose.

To hear the fables of the Name, form, merits, influence etc., full of nectar with faith and love from the Lord's loving devotees, to read and teach the religious books concerning to the Lord, to mutter and sing the congregational singing of the Lord's Name, to pray the hymns in the praise of the Lord or to pray by any other way with the pathetic emotion for the meditation and to obey the instruction of the Lord and the great holy and virtuous persons etc., are the ways of practice to achieve the above remembrance devotion.

He should conceive it as symmetrical, gracious, having a charming countenance, with four long beautiful arms, a most shapely and graceful neck, lovely cheeks and bright smiles; with brilliant alligator-shaped ear-rings adorning well-matched ears, clad in golden raiment, dark-brown as a cloud, bearing on the right and left side, respectively, on the chest the marks of Śrīvatsa, a white curl of hair, and Śrī, a golden streak; decked with a conch, discus, mace and lotus and a wreath of sylvan flowers, feet shining with anklets, nay, distinguished by the effulgence of the Kaustubha gem, graced all over with a glorious diadem, wristlets, girdle and armlets; charming of every limb, pleasing to the heart, with a countenance and eyes enlivened with grace and very soft to the touch. And he should concentrate the mind on each limb individually as well.

Only by the single Devotion of remembering the Lord also as mentioned above, there is riddance of all the sins, obstacles, demerits and sorrows. By remembering the Lord, man can achieve whatever he wants. The attainment of the Lord in the form of eternal peace is also attained very soon easily. The Smriti, the Vedas, History, Puran, Saints, hermits all have sung the great significance of the Lord's, remembrance (meditation) unanimously. The Kathopnishad says—

एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ब्रह्म एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं परम् ।
एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ज्ञात्वा यो यदिच्छति तस्य तत् ॥

(1/2/16)

‘The letter syllable ‘Om’, ‘Onkar’ is Brahma; it is the Supreme Brahma, by knowing this ‘Onkar’ form letter (by adoration) the man accomplishes his desired object.’

It has been written in the beginning of the method of evening prayer—

अपवित्रः पवित्रो वा सर्वावस्थां गतोऽपि वा ।
यः स्मरेत् पुण्डरीकाक्षं स बाह्याभ्यन्तरः शुचिः ॥

‘Either pure or impure, holy or unholy, whatsoever the condition may be, the man who remembers the lotus-eyed Lord, is purified from the innerside and outside both.’ The Lord has said in the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita—

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥

(6/30)

‘He who sees Me (the Universal Self) present in all beings, and all beings in Me, never loses sight of Me, nor do I ever lose sight of him.’

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।
 मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मामेवैष्यस्यसंशयम् ॥
 अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।
 परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥

(Gita 8/7-8)

‘Therefore, Arjun, think of Me at all times and fight. With mind and reason thus set on Me, you will doubtless come to Me. Arjun, he who with his mind disciplined through Yoga in the form of practice of meditation and thinking of nothing else, is constantly engaged in contemplation of God, attains the supremely effulgent divine Purush (God).’

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।
 तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥

(Gita 8/14)

‘Arjun, whosoever always and constantly thinks of Me with undivided mind, to that Yogi ever absorbed in Me I am easily attainable.’

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
 तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

(Gita 9/22)

‘The devotees, however, who, solely loving Me, constantly think of Me, and worship Me in a disinterested spirit, to those ever united in thought with Me, I bring full security and personally look after all their needs.’

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि सन्न्यस्य मत्पराः ।
 अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥
 तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।
 भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥

(Gita 12/6—8)

‘On the other hand, those depending exclusively on Me, and surrendering all actions to Me, worship Me (God with attributes), constantly meditating on Me with single-minded devotion, these, Arjun, I speedily deliver from the ocean of birth and death, their mind being fixed on Me. Therefore, fix your mind on Me, and establish your intellect in Me alone; thereafter you will abide solely in Me. There is no doubt about it.’

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।
बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥
मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।

(Gita 18/57-58)

‘O Arjun! Mentally resigning all your duties to Me, and taking recourse to Yoga in the form of even-mindedness, be solely devoted to Me and constantly fix your mind on Me. With your mind thus given to Me, you shall, by My grace, tide over all difficulties.’

कीटः पेशस्कृता रुद्धः कुड्यायां तमनुस्मरन् ।
संरम्भभययोगेन विन्दते तत्सरूपताम् ॥
एवं कृष्णो भगवति मायामनुज ईश्वरे ।
वैरेण पूतपाप्मानस्तमापुरनुचिन्तया ॥
कामाद् द्वेषाद् भयात् स्नेहाद्यथा भक्त्येश्वरे मनः ।
आवेश्य तदघं हित्वा बहवस्तद्गतिं गताः ॥

(Shrimadbha. 7 /1/27—29)

‘The caterpillar imprisoned by a wasp in (its nest on) a wall and constantly thinking of the latter through (intensity of) hatred and fear attains a form similar to the wasp. With their sins thus washed off by constant

contemplation through animosity on the almighty Lord Shri Krishna, who appeared as a human being by His own will, people attained to Him (easily and speedily too). Fixing their mind on the almighty Lord through concupiscence, hatred, fear or attachment as through devotion, and getting rid of their sin standing as a barrier against His realization, many attained union with Him.'

शृण्वन् गृणन् संस्मरयंश्च चिन्तयन्
नामानि रूपाणि च मंगलानि ते।
क्रियासु यस्त्वच्चरणारविन्दयो-
राविष्टचेता न भवाय कल्पते ॥

(Shrimadbha.10/2/37)

'Hearing and reciting, contemplating on and helping others remember Your auspicious names and forms, he whose mind is fixed on Your lotus-feet even when he is engaged in activities of various kinds no longer deserves to be reborn.'

विषयान् ध्यायतश्चित्तं विषयेषु विषज्जते।
मामनुस्मरतश्चित्तं मय्येव प्रविलीयते ॥

(Shrimadbha. 11/14/27)

'The mind of a man dwelling on the objects of sense gets attached to them. Even so, the mind of one engaged in contemplating on Me, gets absorbed in Me alone.'

अविस्मृतिः कृष्णपदारविन्दयोः
क्षिणोत्यभद्राणि शमं तनोति च।
सत्त्वस्य शुद्धिं परमात्मभक्तिं
ज्ञानं च विज्ञानविरागयुक्तम् ॥

(Shrimadbha. 12/12/54)

'Ceaseless thought of the lotus-like feet of Shri Krishna puts an end to all evils and increases tranquillity of the mind, enhances purity of the intellect, stimulates

devotion to the Supreme Spirit and promotes spiritual enlightenment coupled with Self-Realization and dispassion.'

In the beginning of Vishnusahastranam, it has been said—

यस्य स्मरणमात्रेण जन्मसंसारबन्धनात् ।
विमुच्यते नमस्तस्मै विष्णवे प्रभविष्णवे ॥

'Salutation to the Lord Vishnu the creator of the world whose only memory even makes the man to get rid of the bond of the worlds existence.'

In the 'Ramayan' of Shri Tulasidas the remembering Devotion of Sutikshna is praiseworthy. Being overwhelmed with love in Ram, Sutikshna says to himself remembering the Lord—

सो परम प्रिय अति पातकी जिन्ह कबहुँ प्रभु सुमिरन कर्यौ ।
ते आजु मैं निज नयन देखौं पूरि पुलकित हिय भर्यौ ॥
जे पद सरोज अनेक मुनि करि ध्यान कबहुँक पावहीं ।
ते राम श्रीरघुबंसमनि प्रभु प्रेम तैं सुख पावहीं ॥

'Indulging in his own fancy he thinks—Even the great evil-doer who remembered Him ever, I am so fortunate to see His view before my eyes sight today with my thrilling heart. Today I will feel so much overjoyed in the love of Shri Raghuvanshmani, which various Saints gets the view of His lotus feet hardly by meditating.'

Further proceeding ahead he was so much absorbed in the memory of the Lord that he lost the sense of his body even.

मुनि मग माझ अचल होइ बैसा । पुलक सरीर पनस फल जैसा ॥

'The sage set motionless in the middle of the road his body bristling like a jack fruit with its hair standing on end.'

Not only this, even when he got the view of the Lord

he demanded the boon that, 'O Lord! Remain always abiding in my heart.'

अनुज जानकी सहित प्रभु चाप बान धर राम।

मम हिय गगन इंदु इव बसहु सदा निहकाम॥

'Armed with a bow and arrow and accompanied by Your younger brother Lakshman and Sita, O Lord Shri Ram, Pray, dwell forever like a moon in the firmament of the sky of my heart, free from every desires and be steadily anchored in my heart.'

It proves that the memory of the Lord was intensely dear to Sutikshana. In the same way, there are many names of the devotees of remembering the Lord found in the Shastras, but due to fear that write up may be long one, only a few devotees names are mentioned instead of mentioning the characters of all. As Sanak, Dhruva, Bhishma, Kunti etc., have got the supreme abode by remembering the Lord. Besides this Bhilani of the low caste and Jatayu bird also got salvation by the memory of the Lord.

There is no other means like the meditation of the Lord's virtues, glory and love and form in this world as the means of salvation. Generally, the fruit of all the spiritual discipline is the memory of the Lord to get the deliverance from this world very soon. So being bent upon, all efforts should be made to pass the whole life in the meditation of the Lord by the above mentioned methods. Shri Kabirdas has also said—

सुमिरनसों मन लाइये, जैसे दीप पतंग।

प्रान तजे छिन एकमें, जरत न मोड़ै अंग॥

सुमिरनसों मन लाइये, जैसे कीट भिरंग।

कबीर बिसारे आपको, होय जाय तेहि रंग॥

‘Concentrate your mind to the memory of the Lord like the moth attached to the lamp. It sacrifices its life in a moment but does not remove its body even though it is burnt.’

‘Concentrate your mind to the memory of the Lord like the black bee. Kabirdasji says that forgetting its own self it is so much absorbed in the juice of the lotus that it mixes in its colour without the fear of being closed inside the petals.’

So, the aspirants of God-realisation need always remain concentrated to the Lord while doing all the works also like the Tortoise’s concentration to their eggs, the cow’s concentration to her calf, a sexually passionate persons concentration to woman, greedy man’s concentration to the wealth, the Juggler concentration to their feet and a driver’s concentration to the road.



Feet-adoration

सञ्चिन्तयेद्भगवतश्चरणारविन्दं
वज्राङ्कुशध्वजसरोरुहलाञ्छनाद्यम् ।
उत्तुङ्गरक्तविलसन्नखचक्रवाल-
ज्योत्स्नाभिराहतमहद्दृढयान्धकारम् ॥
यच्छौचनिःसृतसरित्प्रवरोदकेन
तीर्थेन मूर्धन्यधिकृतेन शिवः शिवोऽभूत् ।
ध्यातुर्मनःशमलशैलनिसृष्टवज्रं
ध्यायेच्चिरं भगवतश्चरणारविन्दम् ॥

(Shrimadbha. 3/28/21-22)

‘The devotee should (first of all) concentrate his thought on the Lord’s lotus-feet—adorned with the marks (in the form of lines) of a thunderbolt, a goad, a banner and a lotus—the splendour of whose prominent, ruddy and brilliant nails, resembling the orb of the moon, dispels the thick gloom of one’s heart. The blessed Lord Shiv became all the more blessed by bearing on His head the holy waters of the Ganga (the foremost of all rivers), which has its source in the water that washed the Lord’s lotus-feet. Again, His feet are like a thunderbolt hurled to shatter the mountain of sins stored in the mind of the devotee meditating upon them. One should meditate on these for a long time.’

By the sight view, contemplation, adoration and service of metalical idol, picture or the charming feet of the spiritual image of the divine auspicious form of the

Lord with love and faith to be absorbed in the overwhelming love of the Lord is called the Feet-adoration.

To see the view of the Lord's lotus feet again and again with unsatiated eyes, to serve and adore the Lord's lotus feet and to sip the water of this feet, to meditate, serve and adore the Lord's feet in the mind, to worship the wooden-sandal of the Lord's feet with own hands and meditate in the mind, to worship them, to assume the dust of the Lord's feet on the head with mind and heart, to touch it with bosom, to give due reverence to the bedseats etc., touched with the Lord's feet considering it holier than the holy places of pilgrimage as Ayodhya, Chitrakut, Vrindavan, Mathura etc., the holy places, where the Lord has incarnated or appeared or where the Lord's feet have touched the land, considering it the holiest place of pilgrimage; and taking it in the mind as the dust of Lord's feet to assume it on the head, to consider the object touched with the feet of the Lord reverent from the depth of heart, and place it on head and to worship, bathe, and to use the water of the Gangaji considering it the water of the Lord's feet etc., all are the different kinds of devotion of Feet-adoration.'

The devotion of the feet-service is performed being free from the sense of mineness, ego and vanity with the purpose of getting exclusive love in the Lord's feet.

By the association of the Lord's exclusive devotees, the opportunity of hearing the essence of the Feet-adoration, its mystery and glory is available and with faith in it, the devotion is achieved.

By the practice of the devotion of the Feet-adoration also all the wicked actions, demerits and miseries are destroyed and he gets the super sensuous eternal peace

with the creation of excess of faith and love in the Lord easily. Nothing remains unobtainable for him.

The saints and the Shastras have praised highly the glory of the devotion of Feet-adoration. Shri Shankaracharya says that it is the boat of the Lord's lotus feet only the means to cross over the ocean of the world—

अपारसंसारसमुद्रमध्ये

सम्मज्जतो मे शरणं किमस्ति ।

गुरो कृपालो कृपया वदैतद्

विश्वेशपादाम्बुजदीर्घनौका

॥

Pupil—‘O the kind preceptor! Kindly tell me what is the support for me drowning in this boundless ocean of the world?’ The preceptor—‘The ship of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord is the only support.’

By drinking the water of Lord's feet and by applying it on the head also it brings the highest good. After drinking the nectar of the Lord's feet-water while sailing the boat to reach the next bank, the boatman's significance is being sung by Tulasidas while praising him he says—

पद पखारि जलु पान करि आपु सहित परिवार ।

पितर पारु करि प्रभुहि पुनि मुदित गयउ लेइ पार ॥

‘Having laved the Lord's feet and drunk of the (ambrosial) water in which they had been immersed, alongwith the other members of his family, he thereby transported the souls of his deceased forbears across the ocean of metempsychosis and then gladly took the Lord across the Ganga.’

To see and serve the Lord's feet constantly forever how to feel thrilled every moment, Shri Sitaji is its ideal. While departing for the wood she says to her Lord—
छिनु छिनु प्रभु पद कमल बिलोकी । रहिहउँ मुदित दिवस जिमि कोकी ॥
मोहि मग चलत न होइहि हारी । छिनु छिनु चरन सरोज निहारी ॥

पाय पखारि बैठि तरु छाहीं । करिहउँ बाउ मुदित मन माहीं ॥
सम महि तृन तरु पल्लव डासी । पाय पलोटिहि सब निसि दासी ॥

‘Gazing on the lotus feet of my Lord every moment I shall remain as cheerful as a female Chakravaka bird during the daytime.’

‘Laving your feet and resting in the shade of a tree I shall fan you with a cheerful heart. Spreading grass and leaves of trees on an even patch of ground this handmaid of yours will knead your feet and legs overnight.’

By viewing and serving Shri Ram’s footprints, feet-dust and wooden-sandals of His feet what a great bliss Bharat feels and what is his condition being absorbed in love, listen to in the words of Lord Shiv—

स तत्र वज्राङ्कुशवारिजाञ्चित-
ध्वजादिचिह्नानि पदानि सर्वतः ।
ददर्श रामस्य भुवोऽतिमङ्गला-
न्यचेष्टयत्पादरजःसु सानुजः ॥
अहो सुधन्योऽहममूनि राम-
पादारविन्दाङ्कितभूतलानि ।
पश्यामि यत्पादरजो विमृग्यं
ब्रह्मादिदेवैः श्रुतिभिश्च नित्यम् ॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan 2 | 9 | 2-3)

‘There he saw all around His very auspicious footprints for the good of the earth embellished with the signs of Shri Ramchandra’s thunderbolt, goad, lotus and banner etc., to see this he along with his brother Shatrughna began to roll down on the feet-dust and began to say to himself—‘Oh! How blessed I am that I am availing the opportunity to see the ground embellished with the foot-prints of Shri Ramji! Whose feet-dust which is always sought for by the Brahma, gods and the Vedas etc.’

Gosai Tulasidas says—

रज सिर धरि हियँ नयनन्हि लावहिं । रघुबर मिलन सरिस सुख पावहिं ॥

‘Placing the dust on their head and heart they applied it to their eyes and experienced the same degree of joy as they would on seeing Shri Raghunath Himself.’

नित पूजत प्रभु पाँवरी प्रीति न हृदयँ समाति ।

मागि मागि आयसु करत राज काज बहु भाँति ॥

‘He daily worshipped the Lord’s sandals with a heart overflowing with love and affection and constantly sought guidance from them in the discharge of all kinds of affairs of the state.’

Ahilya is grateful to get the feet-dust of the Lord and says—

अहो कृतार्थास्मि जगन्निवास ते
पादाब्जसंलग्नरजःकणादहम् ।
स्पृशामि यत्पद्मजशंकरादिभि-
र्विमृग्यते रन्धितमानसैः सदा ॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan 1/5/43)

‘O the Supreme Lord of the universe! I was blessed today to get the touch of the dust of your lotus feet. Oh! I am touching today the same lotus feet of the Lord which the gods like Brahma, Shankar etc., with their concentrated mind always seek for.’

All the vices are destroyed by taking the support of the Lord’s feet, he gets rid of all the miseries of his life and he gets deliverance from the ocean of this world like the cow’s hoof prints. Shrimad Bhagavat says—

तावद्भयं द्रविणगेहसुहृन्निमित्तं
शोकः स्पृहा परिभवो विपुलश्च लोभः ।
तावन्ममेत्यसदवग्रह आर्तिमूलं
यावन्न तेऽङ्घ्रिमभयं प्रवृणीत लोकः ॥

‘A man is subject to fear, grief, covetousness, ignominy and inordinate greed proceeding from wealth, house and kinsmen; nay, he is obsessed with the false sense of mineness in respect of the same, which is the root of all sorrow, only so long as he does not take refuge in Your feet, which secure immunity from all fear.’

समाश्रिता ये पदपल्लवप्लवं
महत्पदं पुण्ययशोमुरारेः ।
भवाम्बुधिर्वत्सपदं परं पदं
पदं पदं यद्विपदां न तेषाम् ॥

(Shrimadbha. 10/14/58)

‘With them who have sincerely taken refuge in the boat-like feet of Lord Shri Krishna of sacred renown—feet, which are tender as a fresh leaf and are the goal of the great such as Brahma and Shiv, the ocean of mundane existence is reduced to the mere footprint of a calf. Nay, Vaikuntha, the highest realm, becomes their abode and the world, the home of miseries, ceases.’

त्वय्यम्बुजाक्षाखिलसत्त्वधाम्नि
समाधिनाऽऽवेशितचेतसैके ।
त्वत्पादपोतेन महत्कृतेन
कुर्वन्ति गोवत्सपदं भवाब्धिम् ॥

(Shrimadbha. 10/2/30)

‘With their mind fixed through concentration on You, the embodiment of pure Sattva, O lotus-eyed Lord, the select few (those endowed with intelligence) cross the ocean of mundane existence like the foot-print of a calf with the help of the vessel in the form of Your feet (shown) by the exalted.’

The loving devotees seeking shelter to the Lord’s feet-dust want to remain engaged only in the use of the

feet-dust ignoring even the salvation, what to talk of the heaven. The Serpent's wives say—

न नाकपृष्ठं न च सार्वभौमं
 न पारमेष्ठ्यं न रसाधिपत्यम् ।
 न योगसिद्धीरपुनर्भवं वा
 वाञ्छन्ति यत्पादरजःप्रपन्नाः ॥

(Shrimadbha. 10/16/37)

'Having secured the dust of Your feet people neither covet the uppermost heaven (the realm of Brahma) nor the rulership of the entire globe nor the position of Brahma (the highest functionary of this universe) nor dominion over the subterranean regions nor the mystic powers of Yoga nor even final beatitude (the cessation of rebirth).'

There are found in the Shastras the references of such several devotees who have achieved the exclusive love in the Lord only by the Devotion of Lord's feet-service. So by concentrating the mind to the holy feet of the Lord with faith and reverent love, the regular practice of Devotion should be made.



Worship

श्रीविष्णोरर्चनं ये तु प्रकुर्वन्ति नरा भुवि।
ते यान्ति शाश्वतं विष्णोरानन्दं परमं पदम्॥

(Vishnu Rahasya)

‘Those persons in this world who worship and perform adoration of the Lord, attain the Supreme blissful eternal abode of the Supreme Lord.’

Heard from the devotees of the Lord, read in the Shastras, seen in the metallic idol or picture on screen, any form of the Lord pleasant to the mind, should be worshipped with the outer materials of worship or by imagining any image of the Lord in the mind and to worship with the objects of mind or considering the existence of the Lord in all the beings giving due reverence and respect with different worship materials adoration should be practised with great love, faith and devotion and to be enraptured in love realising His Tattva, mystery and glory is the devotion of adoration.

To worship the idol of the Lord with love and faith with leaves, flowers, sandal-paste etc., and with the riches earned honestly, to perform the Yagyas etc., as ordained in the Shastras, considering everyone the manifested form of the Lord, to offer him due service, according to the class of birth to the best of the capacity and to satisfy him with due welcome, respect, adoration etc., and among the afflicted and anguished, orphans, crippled and the grief-stricken living beings—the hungry should be served with food, the thirst of the thirsty should be quenched with water, the naked should be provided with clothes, the sick persons should be served with medicines, the orphan should be served with shelter for the love of the Lord—

are all these the kinds of the external adoration of the Lord.

To worship with great love and devotion the Lord's supernatural most charming unique lustrous form along with all the limbs garments, ornaments, arms including all the prints on the hands and feet attracting our concentration and intuition without any cause as mentioned in the Shastras after contemplating well in the mind and with exhilaration, invocation, propounding in the mind with different mental objects—are the kinds of worship.

Its purpose is the exclusive love in the Lord and all may attain this love motivated with this attitude to practise it in one's own conduct with love and devotion or to initiate others to act accordingly.

To know the form and essence of the adoration-Devotion the association and service of the Lord's supreme devotees ought to be done.

By the adoration of the Lord with the above mentioned methods the man achieves whatever he desires and easily he attains the Lord. Shrimad Bhagavat says—

स्वर्गापवर्गयोः पुंसां रसायां भुवि सम्पदाम्।
सर्वासामपि सिद्धीनां मूलं तच्चरणार्चनम्॥

(10/81/19)

'Heavenly bliss, salvation, riches of this world or of the nether world, and all supernatural powers follow from the worship of His feet.'

According to the individual actions by worship of the Lord the highest good is attained, this has been proclaimed by the Lord, Himself in the Gita—

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः॥

(18/46)

‘Man attains the highest perfection by worshipping through his own natural duties Him, from whom the tide of creation has streamed forth and by whom all this universe is pervaded.’

Not only this, if the Lord is worshipped with great love and devotion, He, manifests Himself in the divine auspicious form and partakes of the offering of His devotee. The Lord, Himself says—

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।

तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥

(Gita 9/26)

‘Whosoever offers to Me with love a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I appear in person before that disinterested devotee of sinless mind, and delightfully partake of that article offered by him with love.’

The king Prithu, Ambrish etc., many worshipped the Lord according to the ordain of worship with different requisites whole-heartedly with mind and sense-organs and they attained the Lord without effort. What to mention of them, even Sudama without any formal requisites worshipped with only some granules of rice, Gajendra worshipped with a single flower, Draupadi by worshipping the Lord with simply some vegetable leaf, got the supreme accomplishment. Even the woman of lower caste like Shabari got the supreme abode by satisfying the Lord with some jujube tree fruit.

So, the worship of the Lord should be performed with devotion being overwhelmed with love according to one’s one’s inclination and feelings.



Obeisance

ध्येयं सदा परिभवन्मभीष्टदोहं
तीर्थास्पदं शिवविरिञ्चनुतं शरण्यम्।
भृत्यार्तिहं प्रणतपाल भवाब्धिपोतं
वन्दे महापुरुष ते चरणारविन्दम्॥

(Shrimadbha. 11/5/33)

‘O the most exalted person, O the Protector of devotees, I bow to Your lotus-feet which are worthy of being constantly meditated upon, put an end to all discomfiture, yield all desired boons, which are the focus of all sacred places, are extolled by Shiv and Brahma, afford shelter to all and dispel the distress of devotees and which serve as a bark for crossing the ocean of mundane existence.’

To salute the Lord’s form as described in the Shastras, the Lord’s Name, the Lord’s any matellic idol, His picture or the image formed in the mind with body or mind with love and devotion, bowing the whole body flat on the ground or to salute all the animate or inanimate considering the apparent form of the Lord with love and faith with the body and mind and by doing so to be absorbed in the charm of the Lord’s love, is the devotion of obeisance.

Going to the temple of the Lord to salute the Lord’s idol with all the eight limbs of the body bowing down with love and devotion, in one’s own houses to salute the Lord’s idol or picture, His name His feet and sandals of His feet, the Lord’s Tattva, mystery, love, glory and the

charming manifold exploits of the Lord, wherever available in description such holy Shastras and all the animate, inanimate beings, considering them the form of the Lord or thinking the presence of the Lord in them, to salute with love, devotion, meekness and overjoyed emotion are the kinds of the devotion of obeisance. In the Shrimad Bhagavat, the sage Kavi says—

खं वायुमग्निं सलिलं महीं च
 ज्योतींषि सत्त्वानि दिशो द्रुमादीन्।
 सरित्समुद्रांश्च हरेः शरीरं
 यत्किञ्च भूतं प्रणमेदनन्यः ॥

(11/2/41)

‘With exclusive devotion he bows to the sky, air, fire, water, earth, heavenly bodies, living beings, cardinal points, trees and the like, rivers and seas and all created beings, considering them as the body of the Lord.’

Keeping in mind that the Lord is omnipresent and all pervading, how to salute Him, it is the most suitable example of Arjun, Saluting the Lord, Arjun says—

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते
 नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व।
 अनन्तवीर्यामितविक्रमस्त्वं—
 सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥

(Gita 11/40)

‘O Lord of infinite prowess, my salutations to You from the front and from behind. O soul of all, my obeisance to You from all sides indeed. You, who possess infinite might, pervade all; therefore, You are all.’

Shri Tulasidasji Maharaj salutes with folded hands seeing the whole universe as the form of Sita and Ram—

सीय राममय सब जग जानी । करउँ प्रनाम जोरि जुग पानी ॥

‘Recognizing the entire creation as pervasive of Sita and Ram, I make obeisance to them all with folded hands.’

Being in the exclusive love of the Lord to attain the Lord is the motive of this Devotion. The Obeisance-Devotion is attained by the service and company of the loving dear devotees of the Lord and to understand from them the secret glory and Tattva of the Lord’s Obeisance-Devotion.

Having realized the secret of the Lord, he, who salutes Him gets rid of all the miseries of the world. These are the words of the ‘Anusmriti’—

न वासुदेवात्परमस्ति मङ्गलं
 न वासुदेवात्परमस्ति पावनम् ।
 न वासुदेवात्परमस्ति दैवतं
 तं वासुदेवं प्रणमन्न सीदति ॥

‘Nothing is more auspicious than the Lord Vasudev, nothing is more sacred than Vasudev, and no other God is superior and worthy of adoration to Vasudev, he who salutes Him never suffers from any agony.’

एकोऽपि कृष्णस्य कृतः प्रणामो
 दशाश्वमेधावभृथेन तुल्यः ।
 दशाश्वमेधी पुनरेति जन्म
 कृष्णप्रणामी न पुनर्भवाय ॥

(Bhishmastavaraj 91)

‘Even a single time salutation to the Lord Shri Krishna is equal to the concluding bath of ten ‘Ashvamedha Yagya, (not only this, the more speciality is that) those performing ten Ashwamedha Yagya have to take rebirth again, but he who salutes the Lord Krishna becomes free from birth and death forever.’

What is to talk about him who salutes the Lord with love and devotion, even by the salutation to the Lord in any condition or situation all the sins are washed away—

पतितः स्खलितश्चार्तः क्षुत्त्वा वा विवशो ब्रुवन् ।
हरये नम इत्युच्चैर्मुच्यते सर्वपातकात् ॥

(Shrimadbha.12/12/46)

‘Uttering at the top of his voice the formula “हरये नमः”—‘Hail to Shri Hari !’ even involuntarily, without any conscious effort on his part, when fallen (in a well etc.), stumbled (while ascending a staircase), afflicted or after sneezing, a man is absolved from all sin.’

Several devotees of the Lord got the supreme abode by only salutation. Just mark how Akrurji salutes being enchanted—

रथात्तूर्णमवप्लुत्य सोऽक्रूरः स्नेहविह्वलः ।
पपात चरणोपान्ते दण्डवद्रामकृष्णयोः ॥

(Shrimadbha. 10/38/34)

‘Hastily jumping down from the chariot and overwhelmed with affection, the aforesaid Akrura fell prostrate at the feet of Balaram and Shri Krishna.’

Pitamaha Bhishma being overjoyed in emotion salutes the Lord and the Lord at once imparts him His divine knowledge. Vaishampayan Muni says—

एतावदुक्त्वा वचनं भीष्मस्तद्गतमानसः ।
नम इत्येव कृष्णाय प्रणाममकरोत्तदा ॥
अभिगम्य तु योगेन भक्तिं भीष्मस्य माधवः ।
त्रैलोक्यदर्शनं ज्ञानं दिव्यं दत्त्वा ययौ हरिः ॥

(Bhishmastavaraj 100-101)

‘Such Bhishma whose mind has already been

absorbed in the Lord after the prayer of the Lord in several ways saying ‘Namah Krishnay’ (Salutation to Krishna) saluted the Lord, the Lord Shri Krishna intuiting the devotion of Bhishma through His Yogic power went away having imparted him the divine knowledge through which he realized all three spheres as the manifestation of God.’

So, whole-hearted effort should be made to pay obeisance to the Lord being overwhelmed with love in the Lord by the above mentioned way.



Dasya

सो अनन्य जाकें असि मति न टरइ हनुमंत।
मैं सेवक सचराचर रूप स्वामि भगवंत॥

‘And he alone, Hanuman, is exclusively devoted to Me, who is steadfast in his conviction that he is the servant and the whole world, both animate and inanimate creation is the manifestation of the Lord, his master.’

To serve the idols of the Lord in the temples, to sweep and clean the temple, to serve Him by meditating His image in the mind, to serve the Lord seeing His image in all the animate and inanimate to the best of the capacity, to shape up the conduct in accordance with the Gita and Shastras considering them the Lord’s command and to do only that what suits His will, mind and pleasure; these all are the kinds of Dasya-Devotion.

The association of the loving devotees who are conversant of the Lord’s mystery and their service provide the Dasya-Devotion.

The Dasya-Devotion is practised for the attainment of the Lord’s exclusive love and with the motive to live near the Lord for His unremitting service.

Only by the practice of this Dasya-Devotion also man attains the Lord easily.

Goswami Tulasidasji even says that without the sentiment of Servitude the deliverance from the ocean of the world is not possible—

सेवक सेव्य भाव बिनु भव न तरिअ उरगारि।
भजहु राम पद पंकज अस सिद्धांत बिचारि॥

‘The ocean of transmigration, O Garuda, enemy of serpents, cannot be crossed without cultivating the same feeling towards Shri Ram as a loyal servant cherishes

towards his master. Knowing this to be the established doctrine, adore the lotus feet of Shri Ram.'

Shri Lakshman, Hanuman, Angad etc., all are the ideal examples of this Dasya-Devotion. While the Lord Ram is departing for the wood, describing the condition of Lakshmanji, Gosaiji says—

उतरु न आवत प्रेम बस गहे चरन अकुलाइ।

नाथ दासु मैं स्वामि तुम्ह तजहु त काह बसाइ॥

'Overwhelmed with emotion he could not answer but clasped his brother's feet in anguish, 'My lord! I am your slave and You my master; if you abandon me what help!'

What a marvellous lesson the mother Sumitra has given to Lakshman how to serve Ram accompanying him—

रागु रोषु इरिषा मदु मोहू । जनि सपनेहुँ इन्ह के बस होहू॥
सकल प्रकार बिकार बिहाई । मन क्रम बचन करेहु सेवकाई॥
जेहिं न रामु बन लहहिं कलेसू । सुत सोइ करेहु इहइ उपदेसू॥

'Never give way even in a dream to passion, anger, jealousy, arrogance or infatuation. Giving up all sorts of morbid feelings serve them in thought, word and deed. Take care, my son, that Ram may be put to no hardship in the woods; that is my admonition to you.'

As regards Hanumanji, his whole life has passed through the devotion of servitude. First on the Rishyamuk mountain having come to recognise Shri Ramchandraji, Hanumanji says—

एकु मैं मंद मोहबस कुटिल हृदय अग्यान।

पुनि प्रभु मोहि बिसारेउ दीनबंधु भगवान॥

जदपि नाथ बहु अवगुन मोरें । सेवक प्रभुहि परै जनि भोरें॥
नाथ जीव तव मायाँ मोहा । सो निस्तरइ तुम्हारेहिं छोहा॥
सेवक सुत पति मातु भरोसैं । रहइ असोच बनइ प्रभु पोसैं॥

‘In the first place I am dull-witted and deluded wicked at heart and ignorant; to crown all, my master, who is a benevolent to the humble and is no other than the Almighty Lord Himself, has forgotten me.

Although, my lord, I have many faults, let not the master put out of his mind the servant, i.e., You may not forget him. The Jiva (ego), O Lord, is deluded by Your Maya and can be redeemed only by Your grace.

A servant depends on his master and a child on its mother and both thus remain free from anxiety; the Lord need must take care of His servant.’

The Lord, too, lifting up Hanuman clings to His bosom making him realize of His affection and bathing his body with the tears of His love He says—

सुनु कपि जियँ मानसि जनि ऊना । तैं मम प्रिय लछिमन ते दूना ॥
समदरसी मोहि कह सब कोऊ । सेवक प्रिय अनन्य गति सोऊ ॥

‘Listen, O Hanuman! Be not depressed at heart; you are twice as dear to Me as Lakshman. Everyone says that I look upon all with the same eye; but a devotee is particularly dear to Me because he too depends on none but Me.’

The devotee of Dasya-Devotion, how much faith he keeps in his master that is worth remembering from the version of Hanumanji to Vibhishan in this regard—

सुनहु बिभीषन प्रभु कै रीती । करहिं सदा सेवक पर प्रीती ॥
कहहु कवन मैं परम कुलीना । कपि चंचल सबहीं बिधि हीना ॥
अस मैं अधम सखा सुनु मोहू पर रघुबीर ।
कीन्ही कृपा सुमिरि गुन भरे बिलोचन नीर ॥

‘Listen, Vibhishan, the Lord is ever affectionate to His servants; for such is His wont. Tell me what superior birth can I claim—A frivolous monkey, vile in everyway. much

so that if anyone mentions my name early in the morning he is sure to go without any food that day.'

'Listen, my friend: though I am so wretched, the Hero of Raghu's race has shown His grace even to me!' And his eyes filled with tears as he recalled the Lord's virtues.'

When the Lord Shri Ram asks Angadji to return back from Ayodhya, Angadji prays to the Lord—

मोरें तुम्ह प्रभु गुर पितु माता । जाउँ कहाँ तजि पद जलजाता ॥
तुम्हहि बिचारि कहहु नरनाहा । प्रभु तजि भवन काज मम काहा ॥
बालक ग्यान बुद्धि बल हीना । राखहु सरन नाथ जन दीना ॥
नीचि टहल गृह कै सब करिहउँ । पद पंकज बिलोकि भव तरिहउँ ॥

'You are my master, preceptor father and mother, all in one; where can I go, leaving Your lotus-feet? Ponder yourself and tell me, O Ruler of men; severed from You, of what use is my home to me? Extend Your protection to the humble servant, a mere child, without knowledge, reason or strength. I will do all menial service in Your household and shall thus cross the ocean of mundane existence by the mere sight of Your lotus-feet.'

There are a number of such examples, so it is the moral duty of everyone to follow the practice of Dasya-Devotion of the Lord being overwhelmed with love having surrendered body, mind wealth everything.



Friendliness

अहो भाग्यमहो भाग्यं नन्दगोपब्रजौकसाम् ।
यन्मित्रं परमानन्दं पूर्णं ब्रह्म सनातनम् ॥

(Shrimadbha. 10/14/32)

‘Wonderful and remarkable is the fortune and good luck of the inhabitants of Vraja ruled over by Nanda, the chief of cowherds, whose near and dear one is none other than Shri Krishna, the all-perfect eternal Brahma, the Embodiment of supreme Bliss !’

Having come to be savant of the Lord’s glory, Tattva, mystery and significance to adopt onself according to the attitude of the Lord with deep faith and with the mentality of friendliness, to have the exclusive love in Him and being absorbed in the charm of His virtues, appearance and manifold sports to be ever delighted, is the Devotion of friendliness.

Absolutely being free from any personal urgent piece of work to do the loving Lord’s work with due reverence, to be unconcerned for personal work ignoring it before the loving Lord’s work, in spite of hard toil for the Lord’s work to underestimate it, to make constant wholehearted effort to fulfil the duty in doing the work what makes Him pleased, making it the centre of our goal, to remain satisfied with whatever He does, to be overjoyed if any personal object may be useful for the dearest one, the Lord, to consider the equal right and ownership of the loving Lord on our body as well as all our belongings what we claim our sole right and likewise to think our own

belongings and right on Him also what belongs to Him, if we may invest our riches, life and body etc., in the purpose of the dearest loving Lord, to consider it fruitful, to have the constant craving for His company, to be absorbed in His view, speech, contemplation and touch, to be pleased and delighted to hear and speak, read and remember His Name, appearance, merits and character and to be distressed in separation and hope to meet Him every moment and remain always waiting etc., are the kinds of the friendly attitude.

The lover may feel very happy, our friendliness may fully develop in Him and we may never be separated from Him. With this motive friendly devotion is practised to attain friendly devotion.

We should make our association with the Lord's loving friends, we should serve them, we should study the characters of their lives and hear the Lord's merits, manifold exploits and His glory from His loving devotees.

By the devotion with this attitude to God as a friend also man is relieved from anguish and demerits, vices completely and develops the highest love in the Lord and thus, attains the Supreme Lord. Even to the extent, the Lord becomes under the sway of His loving devotee and then, his joy and peace have no bound.

What should be the duty of a friend to the friend, the Lord Ram says to his friend Sugriv in this regard—
 जे न मित्र दुख होहिं दुखारी । तिन्हहि बिलोकत पातक भारी ॥
 निज दुख गिरि सम रज करि जाना । मित्रक दुख रज मेरु समाना ॥
 जिन्ह कें असि मति सहज न आई । ते सठ कत हठि करत मिताई ॥
 कुपथ निवारि सुपंथ चलावा । गुन प्रगटै अवगुनन्हि दुरावा ॥
 देत लेत मन संक न धरई । बल अनुमान सदा हित करई ॥
 बिपति काल कर सतगुन नेहा । श्रुति कह संत मित्र गुन एहा ॥

‘One would incur great sin by the very sight of those who are not distressed to see the suffering of a friend. A man should regard his own mountain-like troubles as of no more account than a mere grain of sand, while the troubles of a friend should appear to him like Mount Sumeru, though really they may be as trifling as a grain of sand. Those fools who are not of such a temperament presume in vain to make friends with anyone. A friend should restrain his companion from the evil path and lead him on the path of virtue; he should proclaim the latter’s good points and screen his faults; should give and take things without any scruple and serve his friend’s interest to the best of his ability and finding him in distress love him a hundred times more than ever. The Vedas declare these to be the qualities of a noble friend.’

Examples of such noble friendship are Shri Vibhishana, Sugriv, Uddhava, Arjun, Sudama, Shridama etc., friends in Braj.

After the victory over Lanka, Vibhishan is keenly desirous that the Lord Ram should visit his residence and gratify him and he begs the Lord Ram also for this. The Lord is overwhelmed with love to hear His friend’s words; His eyes are filled with tears of love and he says—‘Brother! All that belongs to you is mine, but I am unable to stay here remembering the condition of Bharat.’

तोर कोस गृह मोर सब सत्य बचन सुनु भ्रात ।

भरत दसा सुमिरत मोहि निमिष कल्प सम जात ॥

‘Listen, brother: what you say is quite true; your treasury and palaces are all My own. But when I recollect Bharat’s condition every moment that passes, seems an age to Me.’

Establishing friendship with Sugriv, the Lord forgets His darling Sita and he is disturbed in the worry of Sugriv.

तिय बिरही सुग्रीव सखा, लखि प्रानप्रिया बिसराई ।

‘The bereaved in the separation of His darling forgets His own grief to hear the troubles of His friend Sugriv.’

And He says to Sugriv—

सखा सोच त्यागहु बल मोरें । सब बिधि घटब काज मैं तोरें ॥

‘Relying on My strength, dear friend, grieve no more; I will serve your cause in every way possible.’

The Lord had such a great love for Uddhav that he said to him once, ‘Brother Uddhav!

न तथा मे प्रियतम आत्मयोनिर्न शङ्करः ।

न च सङ्कर्षणो न श्रीर्नैवात्मा च यथा भवान् ॥

(Shrimadbha.11/14/15)

‘Neither Brahma (My own son) nor Lord Shiv (who is My own Self) nor again Lord Balaram (My own elder brother) nor Goddess Shri (My better half) nor My own divine personality is so very dear to Me as a devotee like you.’

Uddhavji had a great deep friendly love for the Lord Shri Krishna. That is why the Lord did not hide any secret of His heart before him. The Lord Shri Krishna considers Uddhav the most suitable messenger to convey His message to His beloved Gopies. Shukdevji here says in the description of that situation—

वृष्णीनां प्रवरो मन्त्री कृष्णस्य दयितः सखा ।

शिष्यो बृहस्पतेः साक्षादुद्धवो बुद्धिसत्तमः ॥

तमाह भगवान् प्रेष्ठं भक्तमेकान्तिनं क्वचित् ।

गृहीत्वा पाणिना पाणिं प्रपन्नार्तिहरो हरिः ॥

गच्छेद्धव व्रजं सौम्य पित्रोर्नो प्रीतिमावह ।

गोपीनां मद्वियोगाधिं मत्संदेशैर्विमोचय ॥

(Shrimadbha. 10/46/1—3)

A beloved friend and counsellor of Shri Krishna was Uddhava, the most distinguished of the Vrishinis and a direct disciple of the sage Brihaspati, the preceptor of the gods, and foremost in intelligence. Claspings his hand with His own on a certain day, Lord Shri Hari, who alleviates the suffering of those that flee for protection to Him, spoke as follows to Uddhava, who was most beloved and exclusively devoted to Him: "Proceed you, gentle Uddhava, to Vraja and thereby bring delight to Our parents, Nanda and Yashoda, and relieve in particular the agony—caused by separation from Me—of the cowherd women through My messages."

‘भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति’—‘You are My devotee and friend.’ (Gita 4/3); ‘इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति’—‘You are My exceedingly dear’ (Gita 18/64).

After the murder of Parikshit in the womb of Uttara, by Ashwathama, the Lord Shri Krishna says—

यथाहं नाभिजानामि विजयेन कदाचन ।
विरोधं तेन सत्येन मृतो जीवत्वयं शिशुः ॥

(Maha. Ashwamedh. 69/21)

‘If it is true that I have never allowed any dissension to be created knowingly in My friendship with Arjun, then let this dead child be revived to life.’

How the Lord is overwhelmed with love to His friend, Sudama and how warmly He receives him, Shukdevji writes in this reference—

सख्युः प्रियस्य विप्रर्षेरङ्गसङ्गातिनिर्वृतः ।
प्रीतो व्यमुञ्चदब्धिन्दून् नेत्राभ्यां पुष्करेक्षणः ॥
अथोपवेश्य पर्यङ्के स्वयं सख्युः समर्हणम् ।
उपहृत्यावनिज्यास्य पादौ पादावनेजनीः ॥

अग्रहीच्छिरसा राजन् भगवाँल्लोकपावनः ।
 व्यलिम्पद् दिव्यगन्धेन चन्दनागुरुकुङ्कुमैः ॥

(Shrimadbha. 10/80/19—21)

‘Parikshit ! The lotus-eyed Lord, who is the very embodiment of Bliss, felt extremely delighted when He touched the body of His beloved friend, the Brahman sage. Tears of joy began to drop from His eyes. Taking the Brahman by the hand, Shri Krishna, the purifier of the world made His friend sit on His own couch, and bringing Himself all the articles necessary for worship, washed the Brahman’s feet and sprinkled His head with the drops of that water. Then He smeared the Brahman’s body with excellent perfumes as well as with the pastes of sandal, aloe-wood and saffron.’

What to talk of the ardently dear friends of the Lord, the king of the Tribes, Guha, even got emancipated from the world-sea by establishing friendship with the Lord.

So, considering the Lord only as his dearest one and accepting Him as all in all one should cultivate friendly devotion with the sentiment of Supreme love.



Self-surrender

वासुदेवाश्रयो मर्त्यो वासुदेवपरायणः ।
सर्वपापविशुद्धात्मा याति ब्रह्म सनातनम् ॥

(vi. sa. 130)

‘The man seeking shelter to the Lord and who is dedicated to Him, his innerself is perfectly sanctified and attains the eternal Brahma.’

Having come to understand the Tattva secret, glory and magnanimity of the Supreme Lord being bereft completely of the sense of mineness and ego, to dedicate himself with his body, mind and riches everything and all his actions to the Lord with love and devotion is the Devotion of self-surrender.

Loss or gain, victory or defeat, reputation or defame, honour or dishonour, joy or sorrow etc., should be accepted as the reward given by the Lord and should remain always happy; devoid of attachment and ego with this body-riches, wife-son etc., the Lord is a propeller and I am merely an instrument of His hand, being determined with this attitude to act upon the Lord’s will like the puppet; to study His name, appearance, virtues to hear His manifold exploits, to ponder over, to relate and to concentrate the mind in the study and contemplation with love and faith to know the Lord’s mystery and glory, to consider the sole right of the Lord on our sense organs, mind and wisdom etc., to have the attitude that all the objects of the Lord that have been offered to the Lord; are all verily

of God's own to feel joy in the service of the Lord by anyway possible, Having dedicated everything to the Lord to be completely free from the desire of relish, fondness, luxury, comforts, enjoyments etc., to experience only the existence of God everywhere, every moment in all respects, not to have any one's own desire except the desire of the Lord, to remain always fearless, carefree and delightful on the support of the Lord and not to aspire for the salvation even except the devotion to the Lord etc., are the features of devotion of self-surrender.

This devotion of self dedication is performed for the attainment of the Lord and exclusive love in Him.

This devotion is achieved by the association and service of the loving devotees seeking shelter to the Lord and by hearing from them and contemplating the Lord's Name, form, virtues, glory, Tattva, magnanimity etc.

The Lord, Himself, revealing the significance of the devotion of self-dedication has praised highly, the great fruit of this devotion in the Gita, He says—

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥

(7/14)

‘For, this most wonderful Maya (veil) of Mine, consisting of the three Gunas (modes of Nature), is extremely difficult to breakthrough; those, however, who constantly adore Me alone, are able to cross it.’

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥

(9/32)

‘Arjun! Women, Vaishya (members of the trading and agriculturist classes) Shudras (those belonging to the labouring and artisan classes), as well as those of impious

birth (such as the pariah), whoever they may be, taking refuge in Me, they too attain the supreme goal.'

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥

(9/34)

'Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me and make obeisance to Me; thus uniting yourself to Me and entirely depending on Me, you shall come to Me.'

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥

(18/62)

'Take refuge in Him alone, with all your being, Arjun. By His mere grace you shall attain supreme peace and the eternal state.'

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

(18/66)

'Resigning all your duties to Me, the all-powerful and all-supporting Lord, take refuge in Me alone. I shall absolve you of all sins, worry not.'

The exclusive lover of Me—Sachidanandangan Vasudev, the Supreme Lord only and having firmly determined, of stable mind always constantly, remembering My Name, qualities and glory with unselfish motive with love and devotion constantly through congregational singing, contemplation, reading and chanting hymns, having dedicated himself entirely with mind, speech and body worshipping Me with great faith, love and devotion being overwhelmed with love and seeking shelter to Me bowing down with whole body before the supporter of all, the omnipotent Vasudev, endowed with abundance vigour, affluence, modesty, gravity, generosity, affection and

friendliness etc., all these merits with humble attitude and devotion and feeling oneness in Me, will achieve Me.

Thus, the man who dedicates himself to the Lord, gets rid of all the demerits, vices, sins and sorrows and his intuition develops in all types of devotion of hearing-congregational singing etc. His joy and peace is unlimited. The Lord can never be apart from him. The entire paraphernalia of God becomes devotee's own. He becomes highly hallow; only by the view of His sight, speech and contemplation even the evil souls are purified. He becomes the sanctifier of pilgrimages. The great king Parikshit says to Shukdevji—

सांनिध्यात्ते महायोगिन् पातकानि महान्त्यपि ।
सद्यो नश्यन्ति वै पुंसां विष्णोरिव सुरेतराः ॥

(Shrimadbha. 1/19/34)

‘Men's worst sins, O great Yogi, are wiped out at once by your very presence, even as the demons are by the presence of Lord Vishnu.’

Dharmraj Yudhishtir says to Vidurji—

भवद्विधा भागवतास्तीर्थभूताः स्वयं विभो ।
तीर्थीकुर्वन्ति तीर्थानि स्वान्तःस्थेन गदाभृता ॥

(Shrimadbha. 1/13/10)

‘Devotees of God like you, my lord, are not only consecrated themselves; but it is they who revive the sanctity of sacred places (that get polluted by the contact of sinners) by the living presence of Lord Vishnu (the Wielder of a mace), in their heart.’

Prachetagan says praying to the Lord—

तेषां विचरतां पद्भ्यां तीर्थानां पावनेच्छया ।
भीतस्य किं न रोचेत तावकानां समागमः ॥

(Shrimadbha. 4/30/37)

‘How can the meeting of such devotees of Yours, who go about from place to place with the intention of purifying the sacred places with (the touch of) their feet, not be welcome to him who is afraid of transmigration?’

Shri Shukdevji Maharaj praying to the Lord says—

किरातहूणान्ध्रपुलिन्दपुल्कसा

आभीरकङ्का यवनाः खसादयः ।

येऽन्ये च पापा यदुपाश्रयाश्रयाः

शुध्यन्ति तस्मै प्रभविष्णवे नमः ॥

(Shrimadbha. 2/4/18)

‘The Kiratas, the Hunas, the Andhras, the Pulindas, the Pulkasas, the Abhiras, the Kankas, the Yavanas, the Khasas and other sinful races no less than others of sinful conduct are purged of their sins even by taking refuge in those who depend on Him. To that all-powerful Lord we offer our greetings.’

Such devotees in the form of manifested idol of the Lord’s love feel the whole world full of love and joy. The stream of devotion and love, reverence joy, equanimity and peace begins to flow on the path on which they tread on. ‘The earth becomes blessed having such a devotee on her, the ancestors are exhilarated and the gods start dancing.’

मोदन्ते पितरो नृत्यन्ति देवताः सनाथा चेयं भूर्भवति ।

(Narad Bhaktisutra, 71)

Shri Gopies, Maharaja Bali etc., were already the renowned devotees of this Devotion of self-surrender. So, the mankind as a whole should make effort, being bent upon to seek the shelter of the Lord.



Conclusion

All the spiritual principles for attaining God by action, Yoga, knowledge are the best but in the scriptures the 'Bhakti' has been glorified very much. Out of all the nine kinds of Devotion the devotee of even a single kind of Devotion attains the Lord without any exertion, crossing the ocean of the worldly existence, then, the distinguished devotees like Prahlad etc., possessing all the nine kinds of Devotion they stand supreme. In the description of all the nine kinds of Devotions among the names of the devotees mentioned above for examples, it is not so that only one kind of Devotion was developed in them. The names of those devotees have also been included in that kind who had the predominance of that feature in him so in that type devotion his name has been mentioned in the examples. It has been kept under consideration that the name once mentioned, may not be repeated again. Basically, they are blessed who concentrate their mind to the Lord's Devotion and that clan is blessed in which the Lord's devotees are born. The Lord Shiva says to Parvati—

सो कुल धन्य उमा सुनु जगत पूज्य सुपुनीत ।
श्रीरघुबीर परायन जेहिं नर उपज बिनीत ॥

'Listen, Uma, blessed is the family, worthy of adoration for the whole world and most hallowed too, in which is born a humble devotee of the illustrious Shri Raghuvira.'

In the Shrimad Bhagavat it has been said about the significance of the Devotion of hearing—

शृण्वन्ति गायन्ति गृणन्त्यभीक्ष्णशः
स्मरन्ति नन्दन्ति तवेहितं जनाः ।
त एव पश्यन्त्यचिरेण तावकं
भवप्रवाहोपरमं पदाम्बुजम् ॥

(1/8 /36)

‘That is why Your devotees constantly listen to, sing, repeat to others and contemplate on Your stories and rejoice; and it is they alone who behold before long Your lotus-feet that put an end to the stream of births and deaths.’

यत्कीर्तनं यत्स्मरणं यदीक्षणं
यद्वन्दनं यच्छ्रवणं यदर्हणम् ।
लोकस्य सद्यो विधुनोति कल्मषं
तस्मै सुभद्रश्रवसे नमो नमः ॥

(Shrimadbha. 2/4/15)

‘Salutations again and again to that Lord of most auspicious renown, by singing whose praises, by thinking of, seeing, greeting and adoring whom and by hearing whose glory men are cleansed of their impurities at once.’

The Lord of gods, Indra says—

यस्य भक्तिर्भगवति हरौ निःश्रेयसेश्वरे ।
विक्रीडतोऽमृताम्भोधौ किं क्षुद्रैः खातकोदकैः ॥

(Shrimadbha. 6/12/22)

‘What use can he have for the shallow ditch-water (in the shape of heavenly and other trivial enjoyments) who sports in an ocean of nectar, blessed as he is with devotion to the Almighty Shri Hari, the Bestower of final beatitude?’

The Lord, Himself says to Uddhav praising His floating boat of Devotion—

न साधयति मां योगो न सांख्यं धर्म उद्धव ।
 न स्वाध्यायस्तपस्त्यागो यथा भक्तिर्ममोर्जिता ॥
 भक्त्याहमेकया ग्राह्यः श्रद्धयाऽऽत्मा प्रियः सताम् ।
 भक्तिः पुनाति मन्निष्ठा श्वपाकानपि सम्भवात् ॥
 धर्मः सत्यदयोपेतो विद्या वा तपसान्विता ।
 मद्भक्त्यापेतमात्मानं न सम्यक् प्रपुनाति हि ॥

(Shrimadbha.11/14/20—22)

‘Neither Yoga nor Sankhya nor righteousness nor study of the Vedas, or Japa of the Divine Name, austerity or renunciation captivates Me so thoroughly as does intense Devotion. I, the beloved Self of the righteous, can be captured (only) through exclusive Devotion coupled with reverence. Devotion concentrated on Me absolves even the pariahs (who cook and eat the flesh of dogs) from the stigma attaching to their birth. Piety accompanied by veracity and compassion or even learning coupled with askesis indeed does not thoroughly and once for all cleanse a mind destitute of Devotion.’

वाग् गद्गदा द्रवते यस्य चित्तं
 रुदत्यभीक्ष्णं हसति क्वचिच्च ।
 विलज्ज उद्गायति नृत्यते च
 मद्भक्तियुक्तो भुवनं पुनाति ॥

(Shrimadbha.11/14/24)

‘A man full of devotion to Me—who speaks in a voice choked with emotion, whose heart melts through affection, who weeps incessantly at the thought of his separation from Me and sometimes laughs when reminded of the inwardness of My pastimes, nay, who sings unabashed

at the top of his voice and dances out of joy—purifies the whole world.'

The Lord speaks to Arjun in the Gita—

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।
शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥
भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप ॥

(11/53-54)

'Neither by study of the Vedas nor by penance, nor again by charity, nor even by ritual can I be seen in this form (with four arms) as you have seen Me. Through single-minded devotion, however, I can be seen in this form (with four arms); nay, known in essence and even merged into, O valiant Arjun. '

The devotee Shri Kakbhushundji says—

राम भगति चिंतामनि सुंदर । बसइ गरुड़ जाके उर अंतर ॥
परम प्रकास रूप दिन राती । नहिं कछु चहिअ दिआ घृत बाती ॥
मोह दरिद्र निकट नहिं आवा । लोभ बात नहिं ताहि बुझावा ॥
प्रबल अबिद्या तम मिटि जाई । हारहिं सकल सलभ समुदाई ॥
खल कामादि निकट नहिं जाहीं । बसइ भगति जाके उर माहीं ॥
गरल सुधासम अरि हित होई । तेहि मनि बिनु सुख पाव न कोई ॥
ब्यापहिं मानस रोग न भारी । जिन्ह के बस सब जीव दुखारी ॥
राम भगति मनि उर बस जाकें । दुख लवलेस न सपनेहुं ताकें ॥
चतुर सिरोमनि तेइ जग माहीं । जे मनि लागि सुजतन कराहीं ॥

'The beautiful wish-yielding gem of Devotion to Shri Ram is embodiment of Supreme effulgence which sheds its radiance day and night requiring neither a earthen lamp nor clarified butter nor a wick (to light it). He in whose heart, O Garuda, such a jewel abides is not haunted by poverty in the shape of infatuation. No blast of greed can ever extinguish this light, which dispels the overpowering

gloom of ignorance and the swarms of moths (in the shape of vanity etc.,) keep away from it in a mood of frustration. Nay, vicious propensities like lust, anger and greed dare not approach him in whose heart the gem of Devotion abides. For him venom is transformed into ambrosia and enemies turn into friends; nobody can attain happiness without this jewel. Again; he is never attacked by the terrible mental diseases from which all living beings are grievously suffering. He, in whose heart, the gem of Devotion to Shri Ram abides, cannot have the least woe even in a dream. They alone are paragons of wisdom in this world; who spare no pains to secure the gem.'

So, everyone should make the life and birth a success by taking the shelter of the Lord's Devotion with the methods mentioned above.



The Nine-folded devotion in Shri Bharatji

As described in Shrimad Bhagavat the ideal of Nine-fold Devotion was Shri Prahladji. When Hiranyakashyap asked him to relate the lesson which he regarded the best of the lessons he had studied from his preceptor for such a long time, Prahladji said—

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम्।
अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम्॥
इति पुंसार्पिता विष्णौ भक्तिश्चेन्नवलक्षणा।
क्रियते भगवत्यद्धा तन्मन्येऽधीतमुत्तमम्॥

(Shrimadbha. 7/5/23-24)

‘To hear the names, praises and stories of Lord Vishnu and chant them, to remember Him as well as His names and stories, to wait upon Him, to offer worship and salutation to Him, to dedicate one’s actions to Him, to cultivate friendship with Him and to offer one’s own body as well as one’s dependants and belongings to Him—if Devotion marked by these nine features is practised by a man as something already offered direct to Lord Vishnu, I reckon that such Devotion to be the highest form of learning.’

All the kinds of Nine-fold Devotions as stated by Shri Prahlad are present in the greatest lover and exclusive devotee Shri Bharatji. Bharatji was endowed with moral conduct and virtues, he was savant, detached, sacrificing and pure loving unmotivated exclusive devotee of the Lord. Shri Tulasidasji has praised unequivocally the glory

of Bharatji from place to place in his Ramcharitmanas. In the Ramcharitmanas wherever Bharatji's character is referred, the reader's heart is overjoyed if he has the least emotion of love in his heart to read it and the tears from his eyes start falling down.

In the description of Bharatji's greatness Shri Tulasidasji, himself has said—

भरत प्रेमु तेहि समय जस तस कहि सकइ न सेषु ।
कबिहि अगम जिमि ब्रह्मसुखु अह मम मलिन जनेषु ॥

'Bharat's love at that time was such that even Shesh (the thousand-headed serpent king) could not describe. It is unapproachable to the poet as bliss of absorption into Brahma to those who are tainted by egotism and mineness.'

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भरत प्रीति नति बिनय बड़ाई । सुनत सुखद बरनत कठिनाई ॥

'Bharat's affection, courtesy, modesty and nobility were delightful to hear but difficult to describe.'

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भरत रहनि समुझनि करतूती । भगति बिरति गुन बिमल बिभूती ॥
बरनत सकल सुकबि सकुचाहीं । सेस गनेस गिरा गमु नाहीं ॥

'All great poets hesitate to portray the mode of living, the creed, the doings, the devotion, the dispassion, the stainless virtues and the splendour of Bharat; they baffle the wits of even Shesh (the thousand headed lord of Serpents) Ganesh (the god of wisdom) and Saraswati (the goddess of speech).'

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सिय राम प्रेम पियूष पूरन होत जनमु न भरत को ।
मुनि मन अगम जम नियम सम दम बिषम ब्रत आचरत को ॥

दुख दाह दारिद दंभ दूषन सुजस मिस अपहरत को ।
कलिकाल तुलसी से सठन्हि हठि राम सनमुख करत को ॥

‘If Bharat, who brimmed all over with the nectar of devotion to Sita and Shri Ram had never been born who would have practised the difficult vow of self-abnegation and austerity and control of the mind and senses that transcended the imagination even of sages? Who would have dispelled woes, burning agony, poverty, hypocrisy and other evils of the world through his fair renown; and who in this Kali age would have forcibly diverted the mind of villains like Tulasidas towards Shri Ram?’

Janakji was already enchanted to see Bharatji’s character, merits, devotion and emotional love. In Chitrakut he says to his wife queen Sunayana—

सावधान सुनु सुमुखि सुलोचनि । भरत कथा भव बंध बिमोचनि ॥
धरम राजनय ब्रह्मबिचारू । इहाँ जथामति मोर प्रचारू ॥
सो मति मोरि भरत महिमाही । कहै काह छलि छुअति न छाँही ॥
बिधि गनपति अहिपति सिव सारद । कबि कोबिद बुध बुद्धि बिसारद ॥
भरत चरित कीरति करतूती । धरम सील गुन बिमल बिभूती ॥
समुझत सुनत सुखद सब काहू । सुचि सुरसरि रुचि निदर सुधाहू ॥

‘Listen attentively, O fair-faced and bright-eyed lady; the story of Bharat loosens the bounds of worldly existence. Religion, State-craft and an enquiry about Brahma (the Infinite) are domains to which I have some access according to my own poor understanding. But though acquainted with these subjects, my wits cannot touch the shadow of Bharat’s glory even by trick, much less describe it. To Brahma (the Creator), Lord Ganpati (Ganesh), Shesh (the king of serpents), Lord Shiva, Sarasvati (the goddess of learning), seers, sages and wise men and others who are clever in judgement, the story, fame, doings, piety, amiability, goodness and

unsullied glory of Bharat are delightful to hear and appreciate. They surpass the celestial stream in purity and even nectar in taste.'

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भरत अमित महिमा सुनु रानी । जानहिं रामु न सकहिं बखानी ॥

'Listen O beloved queen: Bharat's inestimable glory is known to Shri Ram alone; but He too cannot describe it.'

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देबि परंतु भरत रघुबर की । प्रीति प्रतीति जाइ नहिं तरकी ॥
भरतु अवधि सनेह ममता की । जद्यपि रामु सीम समता की ॥
परमारथ स्वारथ सुख सारे । भरत न सपनेहुँ मनहुँ निहारे ॥
साधन सिद्धि राम पग नेहू । मोहि लखि परत भरत मत एहू ॥

'But the mutual affection and confidence, O good lady, of Bharat and Shri Ram are beyond one's conception. Even though Shri Ram is the highest example of even-mindedness, Bharat is the perfection of love and devotion (lit. attachment). Bharat has never bestowed any thought on his spiritual or worldly interests or personal comforts even in dream. Devotion to Shri Ram's feet is at once the means and the end; to my mind this appears to sum up Bharat's one and only creed.'

Bharatji Maharaj was the unfathomable sea of the Devotion full of love; or to say otherwise that he was embodied idol of love. Wherever the character of Bharatji is revealed, the ocean of love seems to be swelling there. In addition to it, he was unparalleled in moral conduct and virtues to see whose merits, character, nature and love even Shri Ramchandraji was charmed. He says—

तात भरत तुम्ह धरम धुरीना । लोक बेद बिद प्रेम प्रबीना ॥
करम बचन मानस बिमल तुम्ह समान तुम्ह तात ।
गुर समाज लघु बंधु गुन कुसमयँ किमि कहि जात ॥

‘Dear Bharat, You are an upholder of righteousness, well-versed in propriety as well as in the Vedas and consummate in love.’

Pure in thought, word and deed, you are your only compeer, dear brother. In this assembly of elders and in such adverse circumstances, how can I recount the virtues of a younger brother?’

How and to what extent to describe the glory of Bharat? The whole Ramayan is full of his glory. Here, it has been presented simply a bird eye view in short to some extent. No more cites have been quoted here so that the write-up’s body may not be long.

Some cites based on Mahabharat, Shriramcharitmanas, Padmapuran, Valmiki Ramayan, Adhyatm Ramayan regarding the nine types of devotions found in Shri Bharatji’s character are now being presented as a bird’s eye view.

1. Devotion of Hearing

To hear the stories of the Lord’s Name, appearance, virtues, glory, manifold exploits, Tattva and mystery full of nectar with love and Devotion as related by loving devotees of God and being charmed with love in the nectar of the stories, is the form of Hearing Devotion.

These characteristics are clearly visible in the character of Shri Bharatji. Bharatji was charmed while hearing the Lord’s virtues, character, love and glory. The time when Hanumanji reached Nandigram to convey Bharatji the message of the Lord’s victory, the condition of Bharatji was strange just to hear this auspicious message.

Depicting his condition Tulasidasji says—

सुनत बचन बिसरे सब दूखा । तृषावंत जिमि पाइ पियूषा ॥

‘The moment Bharat heard these words, he forgot all his woes like a thirsty man who has secured nectar.’

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मिलत प्रेम नहिं हृदयँ समाता । नयन स्रवत जल पुलकित गाता ॥
 कपि तव दरस सकल दुख बीते । मिले आजु मोहि राम पिरीते ॥
 बार बार बूझी कुसलाता । तो कहूँ देउँ काह सुनु भ्राता ॥
 एहि संदेस सरिस जग माहीं । करि बिचार देखेउँ कछु नाहीं ॥
 नाहिन तात उरिन मैं तोही । अब प्रभु चरित सुनावहु मोही ॥
 तब हनुमंत नाइ पद माथा । कहे सकल रघुपति गुन गाथा ॥

‘The affection with which he embraced him was too great for his heart to contain; his eyes streamed with tears and every hair on his body stood erect. At your very sight, O Hanuman, All my woes have disappeared. In you I have embraced today my beloved Shri Ram Himself. Again and again he enquired after Shri Ram’s welfare and said, “Listen, brother, what shall I give you (in return for this happy news?) I have pondered and found that there is nothing in this world to match the news you have brought to me. I am thus, unable to repay my debt to you. Now, pray! recount to me the doings of my lord.’ Then, Hanuman bowed his head at Bharat’s feet and narrated all the meritorious deeds of Shri Raghunath.’

In the Valmikiya Ramayan, Bharatji says to Hanumanji—

बहूनि नाम वर्षाणि गतस्य सुमहद्वनम् ।
 शृणोम्यहं प्रीतिकरं मम नाथस्य कीर्तनम् ॥

(Yuddh. 126/1)

‘Indeed I hear for the first time today the delightful

story of my lord, Shri Ram, who proceeded to the vast forest many years ago.'

Such a verse with some verbal difference is available in the Adhyatm Ramayan also. It has been mentioned there—

एवमुक्तोऽथ हनुमान् भरतेन महात्मना ॥
आचक्षेऽथ रामस्य चरितं कृत्स्नशः क्रमात् ।
श्रुत्वा तु परमानन्दं भरतो मारुतात्मजात् ॥

(Yuddha. 14/65-66)

'After then on such a version of the great souled Shri Bharatji, Hanumanji narrated all the exploits in full one by one of Shri Ramchandrajī's character. Having heard all the roles of Shri Ramchandrajī from the wind's son Hanumanji, Bharatji was immensely happy.'

Portraying the condition of Bharatji of that moment, the foremost sage Valmikiji says—

ततः स वाक्यैर्मधुरैर्हनूमतो निशम्य हृष्टो भरतः कृताञ्जलिः ।
उवाच वाणीं मनसः प्रहर्षिणीं चिरस्य पूर्णः खलु मे मनोरथः ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, Yuddha. 126/55)

'Delighted to hear of Shri Ram's impending return to Ayodhya in the sweet words of Hanuman, the celebrated Bharat with joined palms thereupon made the following reply, which brought excessive joy to his mind: "After a long time indeed has my desire been fulfilled.'

After Lord Shri Ramchandrajī's coronation when all the brothers began to live happily in Ayodhya, and whenever Bharatji and Shatrughnaji along with Hanuman used to visit the garden, they used to hear the virtues of the Lord from Shri Hanumanji. Their keen interest and love in hearing the Lord's stories and the exhilaration and

charm etc., created in their mind by the description is clearly visible. Tulasidasji says—

भरत सत्रुहन दोनउ भाई । सहित पवनसुत उपबन जाई ॥
बूझहिं बैठि राम गुन गाहा । कह हनुमान सुमति अवगाहा ॥
सुनत बिमल गुन अति सुख पावहिं । बहुरि बहुरि करि बिनय कहावहिं ॥

‘The two brothers, Bharat and Shatrughna, would accompany Hanuman, the son of the wind-god to some grove, where they would sit and ask Hanuman to expatiate on Shri Ram’s virtues and Hanuman would plunge his sound intellect into the ocean of His virtues and then recount them. The two brothers Bharat and Shatrughna derived immense joy from the discourse on His immaculate virtues and with much entreaty had it related again and again.’

2. Devotion of Chanting Divine Names

While pronouncing the Lord’s Name, form, virtues, majesty, deeds, Tattva and mystery with love and devotion, the horripilation of the body, choking of the throat, fall of tears, exhilaration in the heart being charmed etc., is the form of Congregational Devotion.

All these characters are found in Bharatji. When Bharatji stayed on the bank the Ganga at Shringverpur reaching there, Guha came there to him and he—

दृष्ट्वा भरतमासीनं सानुजं सह मन्त्रिभिः ।
चीराम्बरं घनश्यामं जटामुकुटधारिणम् ॥
राममेवानुशोचन्तं रामरामेति वादिनम् ।
ननाम शिरसा भूमौ गुहोऽहमिति चाब्रवीत् ॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya. 8/20-21)

‘Guha saluted bowing his head on the ground to Bharat whose body was dark like cloud, with a piece of

cloth as garment on his body, his long matted hair as crown and remembering and meditating Lord's Name 'Ram, Ram'—calling in this way, sitting with his ministers and the younger brother Shatrughnaji and said—'I am Guha.'

भरत तीसरे पहर कहँ कीन्ह प्रबेसु प्रयाग ।

कहत राम सिय राम सिय उमगि उमगि अनुराग ॥

'Bharat entered the periphery of Prayag (the area surrounding the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna near Prayagraj) in the afternoon; overflowing with love he cried "Sita, Ram!" "Sita, Ram!" even as he went.'

When distressed with the separation of the Lord Bharat lived at Nandigram, there also he used to pass his time like the hermits. There being steeped in love, he used to narrate the stories full of the nectar of the Lord's Name, muttering His merits and character. It is mentioned in the Ramcharitmanas—

पुलक गात हियँ सिय रघुबीरू । जीह नामु जप लोचन नीरू ॥

'His body thrilling all over with emotion and heart full of Sita and Shri Ram, his tongue repeated Shri Ram's Name and tears of love flowed from his eyes'

In the Patakhanda of Padmapuran also there is the reference—

गर्तशायी ब्रह्मचारी जटावल्कलसंयुतः ।

कृशाङ्गयष्टिर्दुःखार्तः कुर्वन् रामकथां मुहुः ॥

(1/30)

'Those days having dug a pit Bharatji used to sleep in it. Observing the practice of celibacy he used to remain with matted hair on his head and bark robes on his body. His body had grown weak excessively. He remained always agonised with the grief of separation, relating the fable of Shri Ramchandrajai again and again.'

When Hanumanji reached Bharat at Nandigram he finds there—

कथयन्तं मन्त्रिवृद्भान् रामचन्द्रकथानकम् ।
तदीयपदपाथोजमकरन्दसुनिर्भरम् ॥

(Padmapuran, Patal. 2/12)

‘Bharatji is relating before his old ministers the narratives of Shri Ramchandrajī which are perfectly full of the nectar of His lotus feet.’

At that moment to see Bharat absorbed in the condition of restlessness due to the affliction of Shri Ram’s separation, being feeble on account of penance and in the condition of detachment and muttering the Lord’s Name, Hanuman’s joy had no bound. Read the condition of Hanumanji at that time in the own words of Shri Goswamiji—

बैठे देखि कुसासन जटा मुकुट कृस गात ।
राम राम रघुपति जपत स्रवत नयन जलजात ॥

‘He found Bharat seated on a mat of Kush grass, emaciated in body, with a coil of matted hair for a crown and the words, ‘Ram, Ram, Raghupati’ on his lips, his lotus eyes streaming with tears.’

देखत हनूमान अति हरषेउ । पुलक गात लोचन जल बरषेउ ॥
मन महँ बहुत भाँति सुख मानी । बोलेउ श्रवन सुधा सम बानी ॥
जासु बिरहँ सोचहु दिन राती । रटहु निरंतर गुन गन पाँती ॥
रघुकुल तिलक सुजन सुखदाता । आयउ कुसल देव मुनि त्राता ॥

‘At this sight, Hanuman was over-joyed; every hair on his body stood erect and his eyes rained copiously. He felt gratified at heart in every way and addressed Bharat in words that were as nectar to his ears; ‘He, in whose absence you pine day and night, the innumerable

of whose virtues you are incessantly recounting the glory of Raghu's line, the delight of the virtuous and the deliverer of gods and Sages has safely arrived.'

Thus, a very good reference of Bharatji's muttering of the Lord's name and congregational singing of his virtues is found. It is proper for us to imitate similarly as the loving devotee Bharatji used to mutter the Lord's name and sing the congregational singing of the Lord's virtues etc.

3. Devotion of Remembrance

Being charmed with love to contemplate and remember the Lord's name, image, merits, glory, manifold pastimes, Tattva and secret and while pondering in this way to be absorbed in the Lord's form, is the form of the remembrance Devotion. These marks are also found in Bharatji. It was already his nature to contemplate the Lord Shri Ram again and again. He used to dwell upon particularly the supernatural charming form of the Lord Shri Ram endowed with all the virtues. While living in Ayodhya he did already think of the Lord but when he went to Chitrakut to bring back the Lord to Ayodhya, on the way even he remained contemplating the Lord and in Chitrakut he was already enjoying the sight of the Lord Shri Ram apparently. Thenafter when Bharatji returned Ayodhya from Chitrakut he came back contemplating His merits, character and form on the way and reaching Nandigram he passed most of his time in the Lord's contemplation.

In the Adhyatm Ramayan it is written while describing Bharatji's period of living in Ayodhya—

अवसत्स्वगृहे तत्र राममेवानुचिन्तयन् ।
वसिष्ठेन सह भ्रात्रा मन्त्रिभिः परिवारितः ॥

(Ayodhya. 7/113)

‘There (in Ayodhya) in his house Bharatji with the preceptor, Vasishthaji and brother Shatrughna and surrounded by the ministers, began to live dwelling upon Shri Ramchandrajai.’

On the way to Chitrakut describing the condition of Bharatji it has been mentioned—

इत्यद्भुतप्रेमरसाप्लुताशयो विगाढचेता रघुनाथभावने ।
आनन्दजाश्रुस्नपितस्तनान्तरः शनैरवापाश्रमसन्निधिं हरेः ॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya. 9/4)

‘Bharatji, whose heart is full of the wonderful love, whose mind is drowned in the thoughts of Raghunathji and whose bosom is wet with the tears of joy, slowly and slowly reached near the hermitage of Shri Hari.’

And—

भरतस्तु सहामात्यैर्मातृभिर्गुरुणा सह ॥
अयोध्यामगमच्छीघ्रं राममेवानुचिन्तयन् ।

(Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya. 9/69-70)

‘Absorbed only in the contemplation of Shri Ramchandrajai, Bharatji returned for Ayodhya very soon with his ministers, mothers and the preceptor Vasishthaji.’

Shri Tulasidasji says—

मुनि महिसुर गुर भरत भुआलू । राम बिरहँ सबु साजु बिहालू ॥
प्रभु गुन ग्राम गनत मन माहीं । सब चुपचाप चले मग जाहीं ॥

‘The sages and other Brahmans; the Preceptor sage Vasishtha, Bharat and King Janak—the whole host was mentally perturbed on account of their parting with Shri Ram. Revolving in their mind the numerous virtues of the Lord, all wended their way in silence.’

While staying at Nandigram, Bharatji says to his ministers—

दुर्भगस्य मम प्राप्तं स्वाघमार्जनमादरात् ।
करोमि रामचन्द्राङ्घ्रिं स्मारं स्मारं सुमन्त्रिणः ॥

(Padmapuran, Patal. 1/40)

‘O the ministers! This opportunity has come to an unfortunate like me to atone for my sins. So I will purify myself from my vices always remembering constantly the feet of Shri Ramchandrajī with great reverence.’

At this moment Hanumanji—

ददर्श भरतं दीनं कृशमाश्रमवासिनम् ॥
मलपङ्कविदिग्धाङ्गं जटिलं वल्कलाम्बरम् ।
फलमूलकृताहारं रामचिन्तापरायणम् ॥
यं त्वं चिन्तयसे रामं तापसं दण्डके स्थितम् ।
अनुशोचसि काकुत्स्थः स त्वां कुशलमब्रवीत् ॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan, Yuddha. 14/51, 52, 55)

‘Saw Bharatji in the pitious and feeble condition abiding in the hermitage, emaciated in body, with a coil of matted hair and wearing the bark of tree, depending on fruits and roots, absorbed in the meditation of the Lord Shri Ram and said—‘Bharatji! The Lord Shri Ram staying in the Dandak wood, devoted to penance in whose meditation you are concentrated and for whom you are so much grieved that Kakutsthanandan Shri Ram has conveyed you the message of His well being.’

There Bharatji used to be charmed from time to time with the affliction of separation while remembering the joint form with the influence of the Lord’s virtues, character and Majesty. But he was fully confident of the vow of the Lord that He would meet him certainly. On the base of this hope he used to wait for the Lord every moment.

The delay in the sight of the Lord was unbearable to him, so being distressed due to separation he himself used to wail with piteous mind. In this regard, Shri Tulasidasji has sketched a very good picture of his wailing—

भरत नयन भुज दच्छिन फरकत बारहिं बार।
जानि सगुन मन हरष अति लागे करन बिचार॥

‘Bharat’s right eye and arm throbbed again and again. Recognizing this to be lucky omen, he felt overjoyed at heart; but the very next moment he became thoughtful again.’

रहेउ एक दिन अवधि अधारा । समुझत मन दुख भयउ अपारा॥
कारन कवन नाथ नहिं आयउ । जानि कुटिल किधौं मोहि बिसरायउ॥
अहह धन्य लछिमन बड़भागी । राम पदारबिंदु अनुरागी॥
कपटी कुटिल मोहि प्रभु चीन्हा । ताते नाथ संग नहिं लीन्हा॥
जौं करनी समुझै प्रभु मोरी । नहिं निस्तार कलप सत कोरी॥
जन अवगुन प्रभु मान न काऊ । दीन बंधु अति मृदुल सुभाऊ॥
मोरे जियँ भरोस दृढ़ सोई । मिलिहहिं राम सगुन सुभ होई॥
बीतैं अवधि रहहिं जौं प्राणा । अधम कवन जग मोहि समाना॥

‘The term of Shri Ram’s exile, which was the sole hope of his life, was going to expire only a day hence: the thought filled Bharat’s mind with untold grief. How is it that the Lord has not turned up? Has He cast me out of His mind, knowing me to be crooked? Ah! How blessed and fortunate is Lakshman who is truly devoted to Shri Ram’s lotus feet. The Lord knew me to be deceitful and perverse; that is why He did not take me along with Him. If the Lord were to consider my doings, there would be no redemption for me even after countless cycles. But being a friend of the humble and most tender-hearted the Lord never takes into account the faults of His devotees. I have a firm conviction in my heart that Shri Ram will

surely meet me; for the omens are so propitious. But, if I outlive the expiry of the time-limit, no one would be so despicable in this world as I.'

राम बिरह सागर महुँ भरत मगन मन होत।

बिप्र रूप धरि पवनसुत आइ गयउ जनु पोत॥

'While Bharat's mind was thus, sinking in the ocean of separation from Shri Ram, Hanuman, the son of the wind-god, disguised as Brahman came as a bark to his rescue.'

It is worth noting how Bharatji is passing his time while in the separation of the Lord Shri Ram in the contemplation of His virtues and nature in the hope and waiting for Him.

4. Devotion of Feet-adoration

To be charmed in the love of the Lord and forget the self, reverently viewing, serving, meditating and adoring reverently with love and devotion the charming feet and feet dust and sandal of the divine and auspicious metallic idol form or picture or the mental image of the Lord and to take the sip of the nectareal feet-water is called the 'Feet-adoration'.

These characteristics are also obviously marked in Bharatji. Bharatji is already the master of the 'Feet-adoration'. Although, Lakshmi is always engaged in the feet service of the Lord, but we get the lesson of the service and adoration of feet-sandals only from Bharat. Besides this, description of reverence and regard of even feet-dust as done by Shri Bharatji, prior to Valmikiya Ramayan is hardly available anywhere.

Before departure for Chitrakut, the yearning of the service of the Lord's feet and the exclusive devotion to

the Lord's lotus feet which was present in Bharat's heart, is supernatural and praiseworthy. When he went to Chitrakut from Ayodhya, wherever on the way, he found the feet-dust of the Lord he was charmed to place it on his head and apply it in his eyes with great reverence, love and devotion. Bharatji Maharaj remained insisting the lord Shri Ram to return Ayodhya from Chitrakut only with the motive to serve His feet. But when the Lord did not agree to come back to Ayodhya at any cost, he prayed to provide him His wooden-sandals as the symbol of His feet-service. Not to sum up here only placing the wooden-sandals on his head he made it the support of his separation period and while coming back from Chitrakut even on the way meditating the wooden-sandals of the Lord's feet he reached Nandigram. Reaching here, having placed the wooden-sandals on the royal throne; he used to fulfil all the royal affairs after submitting it to them. He considered the Lord's wooden-sandals as the support-base of his life and used to worship them with great love and devotion. The Valmiki and Adhyatm Ramayan have gone so far to describe that when Shri Ramchandraji Maharaj returned Ayodhya, Bharatji went before Him having placed the sandals on his head. How praiseworthy is the Bharatji's devotion of feet-service.'

Shri Bharatji says—

यावन्न चरणौ भ्रातुः पार्थिवव्यंजनान्वितौ ।
शिरसा प्रग्रहीष्यामि न मे शान्तिर्भविष्यति ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, Ayodhya. 98/9)

'There will be no peace of mind for me until I hold firmly on my head the soles of my elder brother adorned with the marks of royalty (viz., the figures of a thunderbolt, flag, lotus, umbrella and so on).'

It is written in Ramcharitmanas—

चरन रेख रज आँखिन्ह लाई । बनइ न कहत प्रीति अधिकाई ॥

‘He placed the dust of Shri Ram’s footprints on his eyes with a profusion of love which could not be described in words.’

And—

हरषहिं निरखि राम पद अंका । मानहुं पारसु पायउ रंका ॥
रज सिर धरि हियँ नयनन्हि लावहिं । रघुबर मिलन सरिस सुख पावहिं ॥
देखि भरत गति अकथ अतीवा । प्रेम मगन मृग खग जड़ जीवा ॥

‘They were as delighted to behold Shri Ram’s footprints as a pauper who had stumbled on a philosopher’s stone. Placing the dust on their head and heart they applied it to their eyes and experienced the same degree of joy as they would on seeing Shri Raghunath Himself. Perceiving Bharat’s condition which was altogether beyond description, beasts and birds and even inanimate creatures (such as trees etc.) were overwhelmed with emotion.’

Adhyatm Ramayan says—

स तत्र वज्रांकुशवारिजांचितध्वजादिचिह्नानि पदानि सर्वतः ।
ददर्श रामस्य भुवोऽतिमंगलान्यचेष्टयत्पादरजःसु सानुजः ॥
अहो सुधन्योऽहममूनि रामपादारविन्दांकितभूतलानि ।
पश्यामि यत्पादरजो विमृग्यं ब्रह्मादिदेवैः श्रुतिभिश्च नित्यम् ॥

(Ayodhya. 9/2-3)

‘Bharatji saw there all around the Lord Shri Ramchandrajī’s most auspicious footprints the earth embellished with the signs of thunderbolt (Vajra), goad (Ankush), lotus and banner etc. He with his brother Shatrughnaji began to roll down in the feet-dust to see them and began to say to himself,—‘Ah! I am really great blessed as I am witnessing today the land embellished with the footprints of Shri Ramchandra’s lotus feet; which

are sought out always even by Brahma and other gods etc., and all the 'Shrutis'.

When the Lord Shri Ram did not agree to come back to Ayodhya even after great insistence, Bharatji then said—

अधिरोहार्य पादाभ्यां पादुके हेमभूषिते ।
 एते हि सर्वलोकस्य योगक्षेमं विधास्यतः ॥
 चतुर्दश हि वर्षाणि जटाचीरधरो ह्यहम् ॥
 फलमूलाशनो वीर भवेयं रघुनन्दन ।
 तवागमनमाकाङ्क्षन् वसन् वै नगराद् बहिः ॥
 तव पादुकयोर्न्यस्य राज्यतन्त्रं परंतप ।
 चतुर्दशे हि सम्पूर्णे वर्षेऽहनि रघूत्तम ॥
 न द्रक्ष्यामि यदि त्वां तु प्रवेक्ष्यामि हुताशनम् ।

(Valmiki Ramayan, Ayodhya. 112/21, 23—26)

'O gallant brother! Stand with your feet on the pair of wooden-sandals embellished with gold placed before you, O noble brother ! Surely these will supply the needs and ensure the safety of men. I should like to live on fruits and roots alone for fourteen years, O delight of the Raghus, wearing matted locks on my head and the bark of trees on my person and actually dwelling outside the city, longing for your return to the capital, O scorcher of enemies ! If, however, when the fourteenth year of your exile has fully ended, O jewel among the Raghus, I do not see you returned to Ayodhya, the following day, I for my part shall enter the fire once for all.'

In the Adhyatm Ramayan also Bharatji says—

पादुके देहि राजेन्द्र राज्याय तव पूजिते ।
 तयोः सेवां करोम्येव यावदागमनं तव ॥

(Ayodhya. 9/49)

'Rajendra! Kindly give me the world venerable

wooden-sandals of Your feet. I will go on serving them until You return.'

इत्युक्त्वा पादुके दिव्ये योजयामास पादयोः ।
 रामस्य ते ददौ रामो भरतायातिभक्तितः ॥
 गृहीत्वा पादुके दिव्ये भरतो रत्नभूषिते ।
 रामं पुनः परिक्रम्य प्रणनाम पुनः पुनः ॥
 भरतः पुनराहेदं भक्त्या गद्गदया गिरा ।
 नवपंचसमान्ते तु प्रथमे दिवसे यदि ॥
 नागमिष्यसि चेद् राम प्रविशामि महानलम् ।

(Adhyatm Ramayan, Ayodhya. 9/50—53)

'Having stated so Bharatji made Shri Ramchandrajī's feet wear the two divine wooden-sandals. Seeing Bharat's devotional emotion, Shri Ramchandrajī handed over both the wooden-sandals to Bharatji. With both the jewelled sandals in his hold, Bharatji circumambulated Shri Ramchandrajī then, and saluted him again and again. Then after, Bharatji spoke with overjoyed words full of love thus, 'Ramji! If you failed to return Ayodhya the first day after the completion of fourteen years I will enter the fierce fire.' Shri Tulasidasji says—

प्रभु करि कृपा पाँवरीं दीन्हीं । सादर भरत सीस धरि लीन्हीं ॥

'The Lord at last took compassion on him and gave him His wooden-sandals, which Bharat reverently placed on his head.'

It is so mentioned in the Mahabharat—

विसर्जितः स रामेण पितुर्वचनकारिणा ।
 नन्दिग्रामेऽकरोद् राज्यं पुरस्कृत्यास्य पादुके ॥

(Van. 277/39)

'Having been sent off by the most obedient to his father Shri Ramchandrajī, Bharatji came back to Nandigram and placing before himself the wooden-sandals began to do the duty of royal affairs.'

In Valmiki Ramayan, there is the description that reaching Nandigram Bharatji spoke in this way—

एतद् राज्यं मम भ्रात्रा दत्तं संन्यासमुत्तमम्।
योगक्षेमवहे चेमे पादुके हेमभूषिते ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, Ayodhya.115/14)

‘This kingdom has been given to me by my elder brother, Shri Rama, as a foremost sacred trust, as well as these wooden-sandals decked with gold, which will supply all our needs and bring security to us.’

Then, he says to the public—

छत्रं धारयत क्षिप्रमार्यपादाविमौ मतौ।
आभ्यां राज्ये स्थितो धर्मः पादुकाभ्यां गुरोर्मम ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, Ayodhya. 115/16)

‘Hold the royal umbrella over these sandals; they are considered by me to be as good as the feet of my elder brother. By these wooden-sandals of my elder brother will righteousness be established in the kingdom.’

ततस्तु भरतः श्रीमानभिषिच्यार्यपादुके।
तदधीनस्तदा राज्यं कारयामास सर्वदा ॥
तदा हि यत् कार्यमुपैति किञ्चि-
दुपायनं चोपहतं महार्हम्।
स पादुकाभ्यां प्रथमं निवेद्य
चकार पश्चाद् भरतो यथावत् ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, Ayodhya. 115/26-27)

‘Having then consecrated the wooden-sandals of his elder brother on the throne of Ayodhya, the glorious Bharat for his part now carried on the rule always subordinate to them. Submitting in the first instance to the wooden-sandals whatever affair of the State came up before him, nay, whatever highly valuable present was

offered to the State, the said Bharat dealt with it in the proper way afterwards.'

Coming to Nandigram Hanumanji—

ददर्श भरतं दीनं कृशमाश्रमवासिनम् ।
 जटिलं मलदिग्धाङ्गं भ्रातृव्यसनकर्षितम् ॥
 फलमूलाशिनं दान्तं तापसं धर्मचारिणम् ।
 समुन्नतजटाभारं वल्कलाजिनवाससम् ॥
 नियतं भावितात्मानं ब्रह्मर्षिसमतेजसम् ।
 पादुके ते पुरस्कृत्य प्रशासन्तं वसुन्धराम् ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, Yuddhakand. 125/30—32)

—saw that Bharat sad and emaciated, dwelling in a hermitage with the bark of trees and the skin of a black antelope wrapped around his waist, wearing matted locks on his head and afflicted through separation from his elder brother, Shri Ram, subsisting on fruits and roots, disciplined, and engaged in austerities, practising virtue, distinguished by a very high head of matted hair, covering the upper part of his body too with the bark of trees and a deer-skin, abstemious and clothed with a glory equalling that of a Brahman Rishi, his limbs covered with dirt, though his mind had been chastened, nay, ruling the earth after placing the well-known wooden-sandals of Shri Ram before him,'

Such a reference is there in Mahabharat also—

स तत्र मलदिग्धाङ्गं भरतं चीरवाससम् ॥
 अग्रतः पादुके कृत्वा ददर्शासीनमासने ।

(Van. 391/62-63)

'After passing the period of banishment the Lord Shri Ramchandrajī reaching Nandigram saw Bharat sitting on the mat-seat wearing the garment of cloth piece and his body thick with dust.'

He was overjoyed to see Shri Ramchandraji coming and—

आर्यपादौ गृहीत्वा तु शिरसा धर्मकोविदः ॥
पाण्डुरं छत्रमादाय शुक्लमाल्योपशोभितम् ।
शुक्ले च वालव्यजने राजार्हे हेमभूषिते ॥

.....
प्रत्युद्ययौ तदा रामं महात्मा सचिवैः सह ।

(Valmiki Ramayan, Yuddhakand 127/18-19, 21)

‘Placing the wooden-sandals of his elder brother, Shri Ram, on his head, nay, taking the white parasol (intended for Shri Ram) adorned with white garlands as well as two white whisks decked with gold and eminently worthy of kings, who experienced joy even before the advent of his elder brother, Shri Ram, on hearing of it—went in advance with his ministers to meet Shri Ram.’

In Adhyatm Ramayan, too, it is mentioned—

भरतः पादुके न्यस्य शिरस्येव कृताञ्जलिः ॥
शत्रुघ्नसहितो रामं पादचारेण निर्ययौ ।

(Valmiki Ramayan, Yuddhakand 14/75-76)

‘Having placed the wooden-sandals of the Lord on his head Bharatji along with his brother Shatrughna moved on foot with folded hands to meet the chief of the Raghus.’

Such a story or character of servitude considering the wooden-sandals of feet as if the feet itself is nowhere found prior to Bharatji. So, taking Bharatji as our ideal we should serve the Lord’s feet, the wooden-sandals and dust of His feet.

5. Worship-devotion

To serve and adore with love and Devotion the Lord’s metallic idol or picture as seen or heard from the mouth of the God-devotees with the external requisites of

worship and to worship the Lord's image in the mind with the mental objects and to serve, worship the apparent idol and feet of the Lord with different objects with love and devotion and to be overwhelmed with love to understand His Tattva, mystery and influence is the 'Worship-Devotion'.

These characteristics were also present in Bharat's character. It is not more to talk of Bharat's adoration of apparent Shri Ramchandrajī with love but, even in the absence of the Lord having established the image of Lord on the seat of his mind, he used to adore Him with mind. When Bharatji Maharaj went to the hermitage of Bharadwajji, in the warm welcome of Bharatji, Bharadwajji had got constructed a royal palace with his spiritual power and a throne suitable for the kings was also erected. But Bharatji did not sit on the throne, but instead of sitting on the throne himself, considering it the throne of Shri Ramji, he remained fanning it with the royal whisk the whole night and thus, serving Him as a minister Shri Valmikiji says—

तत्र राजासनं दिव्यं व्यजनं छत्रमेव च ।
 भरतो मन्त्रिभिः सार्धमभ्यवर्तत राजवत् ॥
 आसनं पूजयामास रामायाभिप्रणम्य च ।
 बालव्यजनमादाय न्यषीदत्सचिवासने ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, Ayodhya. 91/38-39)

'Along with the counsellors Bharat went clockwise round the excellent royal throne as well as round the whisk made from the tail of a yak and the royal umbrella kept there, as if round a sovereign. Bowing down low to Shri Ram as though the latter were seated on it, he paid homage to the throne itself and, taking the whisk, sat down on the seat meant for the chief minister.'

Thus, serving and adoring in this way Bharatji passed his night. What a marvellous service and adoration is this!

When Bharatji came to Nandigram, there having placed the Lord's wooden-sandals on the throne in place of the Lord, he used to worship the Lord according to the rules of the Shastras with leaves, flowers and scents etc.

Adhyatm Ramayan says—

तत्र सिंहासने नित्यं पादुके स्थाप्य भक्तिः ॥
 पूजयित्वा यथा रामं गन्धपुष्पाक्षतादिभिः ।
 राजोपचारैरखिलैः प्रत्यहं नियतव्रतः ॥
 राजकार्याणि सर्वाणि यावन्ति पृथिवीतले ।
 तानि पादुकयोः सम्यङ् निवेदयति राघवः ॥

(Ayodhya. 9/71-72, 74)

'There having installed both the sandals on a throne, and with great devotion worshipped like Ram Himself, He adored them with Gandha, flowers unbroken rice and other puja materials befitting to the royal worshipping everyday regularly.'

Similarly in the Padmapuran also—

रामस्य पादुके राज्यमवाप्य भरतः शुभे ।
 प्रत्यहं गन्धपुष्पैश्चापूजयत् कैकयीसुतः ॥
 तपश्चरणयुक्तेन तस्मिंस्तस्थौ नृपोत्तमः ।

(Uttar. 269/190-191)

'Bharat, the son of Kaikeyi, having placed the auspicious wooden-sandals of Shri Ramchandrajī on the royal throne used to adore them with sandal stick, flower etc., and thus, the prominent king Bharatji began to live at Nandigram remaining engaged in penance.'

Shri Tulasidasji has also said—

नित पूजत प्रभु पाँवरी प्रीति न हृदयँ समाति ।
मागि मागि आयसु करत राजकाज बहु भाँति ॥

‘He daily worshipped the Lord’s sandals with a heart overflowing with love and affection and constantly referred to them in the disposal of the many affairs of the state.’

The worship of the Lord’s idol is found at so many places in the Shastras but having placed the wooden-sandals in place of the Lord and to worship them also with love and devotion—the pioneer preceptor of this teaching was only Shri Bharatji. How admirable is his supernatural worship-devotion!

After the expiry of the period of fourteen years when Shri Ramchandraj Maharaj was coming back to Ayodhya, Bharatji worshipped the feet of Shri Ramchandraj personally seated in the aeroplane with sacred water for washing the feet according to the ordinance of the Shastras.

प्राञ्जलिर्भरतो भूत्वा प्रहृष्टो राघवोन्मुखः ।
यथार्थेनार्घ्यपाद्याद्यैस्ततो राममपूजयत् ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, Yuddha. 127/36)

‘Standing highly rejoiced with joined palms, his face turned towards Shri Ram, Bharat thereupon worshipped Shri Ram (from afar) with offerings of water to wash his hands and feet with and other articles, extending welcome to him in the true sense, Shri Ram’s return being truly welcome to him. ’

Thus, in the stories of Shri Ram there are several places where the worship by Bharatji is found here and there. We should also worship and serve the Lord earnestly considering Bharatji an ideal.

6. Obeisance-devotion

To pay obeisance to the Lord’s form as described in the Shastras, to salute the Lord’s name, the metallic

idol of the Lord, His portrait or the image in the mind and to salute with love the Lord's apparent feet with body and mind with love and devotion and doing so to be sunk in the overflow of the Lord's love, is 'Obeisance-Devotion'. Bharatji was perfectly endowed with all these characteristics. What to admire the Obeisance-Devotion of Bharatji! When he set out to bring back Shri Ramchandraji, he went away saluting the Lord on the way and reaching Chitrakut he fell down prostrate on the Lord's feet and he was overwhelmed with pathetic emotion. Shri Tulasidasji writes—

सखा बचन सुनि बिटप निहारी । उमगे भरत बिलोचन बारी ॥
करत प्रनाम चले दोउ भाई । कहत प्रीति सारद सकुचाई ॥

'The moment Bharat heard the words of his friend, Guha and saw the trees, tears rushed to his eyes. The two brothers Bharat and Shatrughna, made obeisance as they proceeded; even Saraswati, the goddess of speech, felt diffident in describing their love for Shri Ram.'

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कहत सप्रेम नाइ महि माथा । भरत प्रनाम करत रघुनाथा ॥

Bowing his head on the ground he lovingly said, 'Bharat is making obeisance to you, O Shri Raghunath.'

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सानुज भरत उमगि अनुरागा । धरि सिर सिय पद पदुम परागा ॥
पुनि पुनि करत प्रनाम उठाए । सिर कर कमल परसि बैठाए ॥

'In a rapture of love Bharat and his younger brother Shatrughna placed on the head the dust of Sita's lotus feet and made obeisance to Her again and again; while she lifted them each time and stroking their head with Her lotus hand, lovingly made them sit.'

Shri Adhyatm Ramayan describes—

मातुर्मे दुष्कृतं किञ्चित्स्मर्तुं नार्हसि पाहि नः ॥
 इत्युक्त्वा चरणौ भ्रातुः शिरस्याधाय भक्तितः ।
 रामस्य पुरतः साक्षाद्दण्डवत्पतितो भुवि ॥

(Ayodhya. 9/25-26)

‘Kindly forget my mother’s fault and protect us. Having said so Bharatji placed Shri Ramchandrajī’s feet on his head with devotion and fell down prostrate on the ground in front of Shri Ramchandrajī’

While departing from Chitrakut also he has come even with grief-stricken heart having saluted the Lord. Shri Goswamiji says—

अस कहि प्रेम बिबस भए भारी । पुलक सरीर बिलोचन बारी ॥
 प्रभु पद कमल गहे अकुलाई । समउ सनेहु न सो कहि जाई ॥

‘So saying he was utterly overwhelmed with emotion; a thrill ran through his body and tears in his eyes. In great distress he clasped the Lord’s lotus feet; the excitement of the moment and the intensity of affection cannot be described in words.’

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प्रभु पद पदुम बंदि दोउ भाई । चले सीस धरि राम रजाई ॥

‘The two brothers, Bharat and Shatrughna adored the lotus feet of their Lord and bowing to the orders of Shri Ram, they set out on their journey.’

When the Lord came back to Ayodhya from the woods; Bharatji clinged to His feet; Bharatji did not want to loose his hold of the feet, but the Lord forcibly lifted him and clinged to His heart. At that moment Bharatji saluted Sitaji also and declaring himself guilty, he begged for pardon for his fault from her.

In the Valmikiya Ramayan, the description is as follows—

ततो विमानाग्रगतं भरतो भ्रातरं तदा ।
 ववन्दे प्रणतो रामं मेरुस्थमिव भास्करम् ॥
 आरोपितो विमानं तद् भरतः सत्यविक्रमः ।
 राममासाद्य मुदितः पुनरेवाभ्यवादयत् ॥
 ततो लक्ष्मणमासाद्य वैदेहीं च परंतपः ।
 अथाभ्यवादयत्प्रीतो भरतो नाम चाब्रवीत् ॥

(Yuddha. 127/38, 40, 42)

‘Bent low with reverence, Bharat then saluted his elder brother, Shri Ram, who stood in the forepart of the aerial car even as one would salute the sun appearing on Mount Meru. Feeling delighted when lifted on to that aerial car and approaching Shri Ram, Bharat of unfailing prowess, greeted him once more. Approaching Lakshman (and embracing him) as also Sita (a princess of the Videha territory), Bharat, the scourge of his enemies thereupon joyously saluted her and mentioned his name too.’

Almost like the same description is there in the Adhyatm Ramayan also. There has been mentioned—

आरोपितो विमानं तद् भरतः सानुजस्तदा ।
 राममासाद्य मुदितः पुनरेवाभ्यवादयत् ॥
 ततो लक्ष्मणमासाद्य वैदेहीं नाम कीर्तयन् ।
 अभ्यवादयत प्रीतो भरतः प्रेमविह्वलः ॥

(Yuddha. 14/83, 85)

‘At that time, brother Shri Ram made Bharat along with Shatrughna mount in the plane. On reaching close to Shri Ramchandrajī, being overjoyed Bharatji saluted Him again. Then, being overwhelmed with love Bharatji

saluted Sitaji pronouncing his name with great love having met Lakshman.'

Giving a bird's eye view of the description of Bharatji's condition at that time it is described in the Padmapuran as follows—

दृष्ट्वा समुत्तीर्णमिमं रामचन्द्रं स तैर्युतम् ।
 हर्षाश्रूणि प्रमुञ्चंश्च दण्डवत् प्रणनाम ह ॥
 उत्थापितोऽपि च भृशं नोदतिष्ठद् रुदन् मुहुः ।
 रामचन्द्रपदाम्भोजग्रहणासक्तबाहुभृत् ॥
 पतिव्रतां जनकजाममन्यत ननाम च ॥
 मातः क्षमस्व यदयं मया कृतमबुद्धिना ।

(Padmapuran, Patal. 2/29, 31, 37-38)

'To see Shri Ramchandrajī along with His attendants on the ground that Bharatji shedding tears of joy, laid down prostrate on the earth before Him. In the beginning, he did not rise despite lifting him again and again by the Lord; instead of rising up, he remained bursting to tears continuously holding the lotus feet of Shri Ramchandrajī. Thenafter, having taken the sight of the chaste Sita the daughter of Janak, Bharat saluted her with great respect and said—'Mother! Pardon this fool like me for the fault committed by me.'

In the Ramcharitmanas, it has been described as follows—

गहे भरत पुनि प्रभु पद पंकज । नमत जिन्हहि सुर मुनि संकर अज ॥
 परे भूमि नहिं उठत उठाए । बर करि कृपासिंधु उर लाए ॥
 स्यामल गात रोम भए ठाढ़े । नव राजीव नयन जल बाढ़े ॥

'Then Bharat clasped the Lord's lotus-feet, which are adored by gods and sages, Shankar and Brahma. He lay prostrate on the ground and would not rise even though being lifted up, till at last the all-merciful lovingly took him

up and pressed him to his bosom. Every hair on His swarthy form stood erect and His lotus eyes were flooded with tears.'

What a marvellous condition of love and meekness is! Bharatji was already the idol of love and humbleness. To pay obeisance was his nature. Whenever he met the Lord, he used to salute Him everytime. His this ideal obeisance of Devotion is worth imitating for us.

7. Servitude-devotion

'Having the well understanding of the Lord's virtues, Tattva, mystery and glory to serve Him with love and devotion and to act upon His will and to treat the Lord our master and ourselves as His servant is the 'servitude-devotion.'

This attitude is found in Bharatji at every step. This is his prominent nature. When Bharatji returned to Ayodhya from his maternal uncle's house, he said to Kaikeyi clearly that he would bring Shri Ram back and become His servant and serve Him. Later on the family priest Vasishthaji and his ministers made their best efforts to make him sovereign but Bharat's reply was merely that—'I find neither your good nor mine in this respect. My good lies in His service only. All were charmed to hear Bharat's bent of mind. With this attitude of mind Bharatji departed for Chitrakut from Ayodhya to bring back the Lord. On the way, wherever he halted his behaviour and discourse gives the glimpse of the same view. In Chitrakut also his feelings of servitude reflect in his every action because he was a living idol of servitude-devotion. Throughout his life he had regarded the service of the Lord and the obedience of His command his best and the highest duty and he thought his highest good lies only in this. In his eye-view there was no other work better than the service

of the Lord Shri Ram. Even the hardest order of the Lord was reverentially acceptable to him. Bharatji considered it sin to create the position of embarrassment for his Lord. It was only to obey the order of his Lord Shri Ram that he suffered the grief of His separation for fourteen years. Even while discharging the royal duties, his service attitude towards the Lord flashed. When the Lord Shri Ram arrived back after fourteen years of exile, Bharatji handed over His kingdom to His feet and remained engaged in His service and obedience throughout his life. If sometimes He had to move somewhere outside, even there also to serve Him and to enquire of the sermons in his own interest—was his main work. Thus, Bharatji passed his whole life in the servitude of Devotion to the Lord Shri Ram.

The Lord, Himself was charmed with his service-attitude, obedience and with his emotion of love. In this respect his appreciation to any degree is insufficient. Bharatji is the highest ideal of love and humble service. Though the whole conduct and character of Bharatji is the indication of servitude, yet at so many places there is the priority of servitude attitude. Now, a picture of his slavish attitude is being sketched with some main proofs in the following lines—

These are his words for his mother Kaikeyi—

निवर्तयित्वा रामं च तस्याहं दीप्ततेजसः ।
दासभूतो भविष्यामि सुस्थितेनान्तरात्मना ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, Ayodhya. 73/27)

‘Nay, having caused Shri Ram to return from the forest, I shall settle down in life with a composed mind, turning a servant of the aforesaid prince of effulgent glory.’

In the Adhyatm Ramayan also there is such reference—

गच्छाम्यारण्यमद्य स्थिरमतिरखिलं दूरतोऽपास्य राज्यम् ।
रामं सीतासमेतं स्मितरुचिरमुखं नित्यमेवानुसेवे ॥

(Ayodhya. 7/114)

‘I have firmly decided; leaving the whole royalty completely, I will move for the wood just today and serve Shri Ram and Sita daily having a smiling and beautiful face.’

Bharatji says to the preceptor Vasishtha and his ministers—

हितं हमारं सियपतिं सेवकाई । सो हरिं लीन्ह मातु कुटिलाई ॥

‘My good lies in the service of Shri Ram, although I have been deprived of that privilege through my mother’s perversity.’

On the way he speaks about Guha—

अहं रामस्य दासा ये तेषां दासस्य किंकरः ।
यदि स्यां सफलं जन्म मम भूयान्न संशयः ॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya. 8/33)

‘Undoubtedly, my life will be success if I may get the opportunity to be even the servant of Shri Ram’s servants.’

How higher the slavish attitude is!

Reaching Chitrakut Bharatji says to the Lord Shri Ram—

अहमप्यागमिष्यामि सेवे त्वां लक्ष्मणो यथा ।
नो चेत्प्रायोपवेशेन त्यजाम्येतत्कलेवरम् ॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya. 9/39)

‘Well! If you don’t want to come back from the woods, then allow me that I may serve You like Lakshman

accompanying you in the forest; otherwise I will give up this body remaining without food and water.' What a great insistence Bharatji gives for the Lord's service!

But recollecting the Lord's Nature Bharatji again began to say—

अब करुणाकर कीजिअ सोई । जन हित प्रभु चित छेभु न होई ॥
जो सेवकु साहिबहि सँकोची । निज हित चहइ तासु मति पोची ॥
सेवक हित साहिब सेवकाई । करै सकल सुख लोभ बिहाई ॥

'Now, O mine of compassion, do that only whereby you do not feel perturbed on account of your servant (i.e., myself). A servant who seeks his own gain by placing his master in an embarrassing situation is a mean-minded fellow. A servant will gain only if he serves his master renouncing all his personal comforts and greed.'

After the return of the Lord Ayodhya, whenever Bharatji accompanied Him to any garden or groves, he remained engaged in His service there also.

Shri Tulasidasji says—

सुनि प्रभु बचन भरत गहे चरना । सुनहु नाथ प्रनतारति हरना ॥
करउँ कृपानिधि एक ढिठाई । मैं सेवक तुम्ह जन सुखदाई ॥

'On hearing the Lord's words Bharat clasped His feet. Listen, my Lord, reliever of the suppliant's agony: Yet, O repository of compassion, I make bold to make one submission, I being Your servant and You the solace of Your devotees!'

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हरन सकल श्रम प्रभु श्रम पाई । गए जहाँ सीतल अँवराई ॥
भरत दीन्ह निज बसन डसाई । बैठे प्रभु सेवहिं सब भाई ॥

'The Lord who is reliever of all fatigue, Himself felt

tired and retired to a cool mango grove, where Bharat spread his own scarf and the Lord took His seat thereon with all His brothers in attendance.'

Thus, Bharatji remained continuously engaged in the Lord's service. What a praiseworthy is Bharat's ideal attitude of service! Having pondered over well the character of Bharat, considering his slavish mentality as an idea, we should imitate him.

8. Devotion of Friendliness

Keeping in mind after well understanding the Lord's influence, Tattva, mystery and glory with firm conviction and shape ourselves according to His liking with the friendly attitude, to have exclusive love in Him and being emotionally overwhelmed with His virtues, image and sportive display to remain always gay is the Devotion of friendliness.

This is the only characteristic; the devotion as a friend lacks in Bharat's character and conduct; but with the other attitudes and sentiments of Devotion, the devotion as a friend certainly also reflects. As has been described in Valmiki Ramayan, Bharatji says to his mother—

यो मे भ्राता पिता बन्धुर्यस्य दासोऽस्मि सम्मतः ।
तस्य मां शीघ्रमाख्याहि रामस्याक्लिष्टकर्मणः ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, Ayodhya. 72/32)

'Pray, announce me soon to Shri Ram, who is unwearied in action, nay, who is my elder brother, father in the absence of the Emperor and friend, all in one, and whose beloved servant I am.'

In Chitrakut, Bharatji has said praying to the Lord Shri Ram—

एभिश्च सचिवैः सार्धं शिरसा याचितो मया ।

भ्रातुः शिष्यस्य दासस्य प्रसादं कर्तुमर्हसि ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, Ayodhya. 101/12)

‘Solicited by me with bent head in conjunction with these ministers, be pleased to show grace to this servant, who is at the same time your younger brother and pupil.’

In the above verses with the words pupil, slave, father there is the use of ‘words’ ‘brother’ and ‘kinsman’ also, which is the indication of friendly attitude and to use the word ‘Bandhu’ separately with the word ‘Bharat’ proves clearly the friendly attitude. So, Bharatji had the devotion as a friend also with the feelings of brother, slave and pupil. Due to the attitude of equality in the brotherly attitude also, the friendly attitude reflects. The Ramayan written by Tulasidasji also proves it. These are the words of Bharatji himself—

प्रभु पितु मातु सुहृद गुरु स्वामी । पूज्य परम हित अंतरजामी ॥

‘O Lord You are my father, mother, friend, preceptor, master, the object of my adoration, my greatest benefactor and my inner controller.’

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सुहृद सुजान सुसाहिबहि बहुत कहब बड़ि खोरि ।

आयसु देइअ देव अब सबइ सुधारी मोरि ॥

‘It is a great mistake to say too much to a loving, intelligent and good master. Therefore, be pleased my Lord, to give your command; for you have accomplished all my objects.’

In these stanzas with the use of Lord, father, mother,

preceptor, master, object of adoration, benefactor, there is the use of the word 'friend' also which has its different meaning from them. So, here, the word 'friend' is the indicative of the friendly attitude of Devotion. Undoubtedly, in spite of being of the slavish attitude in Shri Ram mainly, due to brotherhood and love there was the friendly sentiment also.

The Lord Shri Ram's treatment to His brothers also indicates the Lord's attitude of friendliness with His brothers. Before the departure to the woods at the occasion of preparation for coronation. Shri Ramchandraji considering the equal right of all the brothers in the kingdom says—

जनमे एक संग सब भाई । भोजन सयन केलि लरिकाई ॥
 करनबेध उपबीत बिआहा । संग संग सब भए उछाहा ॥
 बिमल बंस यहु अनुचित एकू । बंधु बिहाइ बड़ेहि अभिषेकू ॥
 प्रभु सप्रेम पछितानि सुहाई । हरउ भगत मन कै कुटिलाई ॥

'My brothers and myself were all born together and together have we dined, slept and played in our childhood; the piercing of our ear-lobes (one of the sixteen sacraments incumbent on a Hindu) our investiture with the sacred thread, wedding and all other ceremonies have been gone through together. The only unseemly practice in this spotless line is that the eldest brother should be installed on the throne to the exculsion of his younger brothers. May this loving and graceful expression of regret on the part of the Lord drive away all evil tendencies from the mind of His devotees.'

It reveals Shri Ram's friendly attitude with all the brothers. Mostly the word 'friend' has been commonly used for 'Lakshman'. The Lord says to Lakshman when he is well ready to accompany Him to the 'woods'.

स्निग्धो धर्मरतो धीरः सततं सत्यथे स्थितः ।

प्रियः प्राणसमो वश्यो विजेयश्च सखा च मे ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, Ayodhya. 31/10)

‘Full of affection for me, devoted to virtue, resolute, constantly firm on the right path as shown by the Vedas, dear to me as life, amenable to my control and obedient, you are my born companion too and, therefore, worthy in every way of accompanying me.’

In addition to it there is one verse in the Patal Khand of Padmapuran in which being overwhelmed with the emotion of love Shri Ram has pronounced the word ‘brother’ five times for Bharat. It includes the Lord’s feeling of love and equanimity for Bharat; it indicates the feeling of friendliness.

यानादवतताराशु

भ्रातर्भ्रातः

विरहक्लिन्नमानसः ।

पुनर्भ्रातर्भ्रातर्भ्रातर्वदन्मुहुः ॥

(Padma Puran, Patal. 2/28)

‘Approaching near the Lord Shri Ram’s heart came to be so impatient that he at once alighted from the aerial car saying again and again ‘Brother! Brother Bharat!’ repeatedly saying ‘Brother! brother!! brother!!!’

In the Ramayan written by Tulasidas also there are the references of the Lord’s treatment with Bharat with the feeling of equanimity with due honour.

Shri Goswamiji writes—

कृपासिंधु सनमानि सुबानी । बैठाए समीप गहि पानी ॥

‘The Ocean of Compassion, Shri Ram, honoured him with kind words and taking him by the hand seated him by His side.’

This behaviour of the Lord Shri Ramchandraji Maharaj with Bharat indicates clearly His sentiment of friendliness.

Thus, at many places in Shri Ramchandraji's behaviour with Bharat, there lies the feeling of honour, respect, equanimity and love and that is obviously visible and this points out clearly the glimpse of friendliness. As whenever Bharatji salutes, the Lord embraces him to His heart. This behaviour of the Lord is the indicative of friendliness.

9. Devotion of Self-surrender

Being devoid of ego and the sense of mineness to surrender himself with body, mind and wealth, kin and his all the actions to the Lord with great love and devotion considering every object as the belonging of the Lord is Devotion of self-surrender.

Bharatji is no less in anyway in the Devotion of self-surrender; because he considered himself already surrendered to the Lord. In the Ramayan, of Tulasidas, wailing in lamentation pointing out towards his father before Kaikeyi, Bharat says—

चलत न देखन पायउँ तोही । तात न रामहि सौँपेहु मोही ॥

‘I could not see you before you left, nor did you, my father, entrust me to the care of Shri Ram.’

In the similar way it has been described in the Adhyatm Ramayan also—

हा तात क्व गतोऽसि त्वं त्यक्त्वा मां वृजिनार्णवे ॥

असमर्प्यैव रामाय राज्ञे मां क्व गतोऽसि भोः ।

(Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya. 7/66-67)

‘O Father! Leaving me in the ocean of sorrow where did you go away? O father, where have you gone without handing me over in the charge of king Rama?’

Such repentance of Bharatji proves that he thought himself completely surrendered to Shri Ram.

Besides this 'whatever the sovereignty and riches are, the entire belongs to the chief of the Raghus Lord Shri Ram, I, too, belong to Him, so having surrendered the entire to the Lord, I will serve Him'—Keeping in mind this attitude he went to Chitrakut. He left no stone unturned to persuade Shri Ramchandrajai to come back but Shri Ramchandrajai did not agree at any cost to return and compelled Bharat, instead for the royal administration. 'To obey the Lord Ram's order only is your moral duty'—Due to the same consent of Vasishthaji so also taking the support of the Lord's wooden-sandals in His place, he surrendered the entire including himself to the wooden-sandals of the Lord. On the expiry of the period of fourteen years when the Lord returned Ayodhya, he handed over the kingdom of the Lord lying with him as trust and surrendered his body also to the feet of the Lord. Thinking his highest good in the shelter of the Lord, he remained obeying Him throughout the life. What to talk of any object of the royal state, he did not consider his right even on his own body. Considering the Lord only as his all he used to depend on Him only. All the Shastras as Ramayan etc., are its proof. Some proofs are quoted below as a bird's eye view.

Bharatji says to Bharadwajji—

मम राज्येन किं स्वामिन् रामे तिष्ठति राजनि ।
 किङ्करोऽहं मुनिश्रेष्ठ रामचन्द्रस्य शाश्वतः ॥
 अतो गत्वा मुनिश्रेष्ठ रामस्य चरणान्तिके ।
 पतित्वा राज्यसम्भारान् समर्प्यात्रैव राघवम् ॥

.....

नेष्येऽयोध्यां रमानाथं दासः सेवेऽतिनीचवत् ॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya. 8/49—51)

‘Lord! What is my purpose with the kingdom in the presence of the Lord Ram? O the foremost sage! I am forever the slave of Shri Ramchandrajī. So, O the best among the Munis! Approaching Shri Ram, lying on His lotus feet having handed over all the objects of the royal kingdom here, I will bring back the lord of Lakshmi Shri Ram to Ayodhya and like the most lowliest slave I will serve Him.’

Expressing the emotion of self-surrender Bharatji is saying to Shri Ramchandrajī—

कीन्ह सप्रेम प्रनामु बहोरी । बोले पानि पंकरुह जोरी ॥
नाथ भयउ सुखु साथ गए को । लहेउँ लाहु जग जनमु भए को ॥
अब कृपाल जस आयसु होई । करौं सीस धरि सादर सोई ॥
सो अवलंब देव मोहि देई । अवधि पार पावौं जेहि सेई ॥

He then made loving obeisance and spoke with the lotus palms joined together. “My Lord, I have derived the joy of having accompanied you to the forest and have also obtained the reward of being born in the world. Now, my gracious Lord, whatever be your command, I will bow to it and carry it out with reverence. Pray, vouchsafe to me, good Sir, some tangible support by serving which I may be enabled to live through the end of the term of your exile.”

While staying at Nandigram he is talking to the ministers—

ततो निक्षिप्तभारोऽहं राघवेण समागतः ।
निवेद्य गुरवे राज्यं भजिष्ये गुरुवर्तिताम् ॥
राघवाय च संन्यासं दत्त्वेमे वरपादुके ।
राज्यं चेदमयोध्यां च धूतपापो भवाम्यहम् ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, Ayodhya. 115/19-20)

“Having restored the kingdom to my elder brother,

when re-united with Shri Ram, a scion of Raghu, and thereby laid down the burden of responsibility, I shall then assume the role of a servant of my elder brother. Nay, having given back to Shri Ram, a scion of Raghu, this kingdom, held as a trust till then, as well as the city of Ayodhya and the pair of excellent wooden-sandals, I shall have shaken of the stigma of having been instrumental in bringing about the exile of my elder brother.'

Then after when Bharatji returned to Ayodhya what Bharatji did is as follows—

पादुके ते तु रामस्य गृहीत्वा भरतः स्वयम् ।
चरणाभ्यां नरेन्द्रस्य योजयामास धर्मवित् ॥
अब्रवीच्च तदा रामं भरतः स कृताञ्जलिः ।
एतत् ते सकलं राज्यं न्यासं निर्यातितं मया ॥
अद्य जन्म कृतार्थं मे संवृत्तश्च मनोरथः ।

(Valmiki Ramayan, Yuddha. 127/54—56)

'Taking the wooden-sandals bestowed on him by Shri Ram, Bharat for his part, who knew what is right, himself placed them below the feet of Shri Ram (a ruler of men). Nay, with joined palms the said Bharat spoke as follows to Shri Ram:—"Here is your entire kingdom held in trust by me so long rendered back to you by me. Accomplished of purpose is my birth today and my desire too stands consummated in that I see you, its king come back to Ayodhya.'

In the Adhyatm Ramayan also somewhat the similar reference is worth noting—

भरतः पादुके ते तु राघवस्य सुपूजिते ।
योजयामास रामस्य पादयोर्भक्तिसंयुतः ॥
राज्यमेतन्न्यासभूतं मया निर्यातितं तव ।
अद्य मे सफलं जन्म फलितो मे मनोरथः ॥

(Yuddha. 14/93-94)

‘Then after, Bharatji got the well worshipped sandals with devotion put on to the feet of Shri Ram’s feet and said—‘Lord! I hand over your royal kingdom given by you to me as trust to you; Today I feel gratified and my life to be fruitful and all my ambitions are accomplished.’

In Mahabharat also there is the reference—

तस्मै तद् भरतो राज्यमागतायातिसत्कृतम् ।
न्यासं निर्यातयामास युक्तः परमया मुदा ॥

(Van. 291/65)

‘Bharatji handed over the empire which was lying to him as trust to Shri Ramchandrajai very gladly when He came back to Ayodhya.’

Basically, Bharatji’s entire life is the manifestation of self-surrender. His all the performances or actions were for the cause of Shri Ram. The ultimate and ever goal of his life was the love and pleasure of the Lord Ram; because in Bharatji the devotion of love also besides the ninefold devotion was present perfectly. He was the living idol of love. That is why the sage Bharadwajji had said—

तुम्ह तौ भरत मोर मत एहू । धरें देहु जनु राम सनेहू ॥

‘As for yourself, Bharat, my opinion is that you are the very personification of love for Shri Ram.’

In spite of all these Bharatji finds no merit in himself. He considers himself merely sensuous, deceit and crooked. Actually, that is the true self-surrender where there is no trace of vanity of even surrender at all. Everything is surrendered easily and it is thought that there is nothing at all. Bharatji is of such a type.

Such men who lead their life following this Bharat’s outstanding devotion of self-sacrifice as an ideal can be blessed ones.

Epilogue

In the above lines nine kinds of Devotion have been explained, it should be divided into three parts: the first three—Hearing, Congregational singing and Remembrance are performed in the absence of the deity and the second three—Feet service, Adoration and Obeisance-devotion are performed directly before the Lord Himself on attaining Him; but in absence of the Lord with the attitude of mind regarding as if before sight also these Devotion are performed.

These six Devotions are practical to be performed in action. The rest three devotions—Slavish, Friendly and Self-surrender are the form of feeling; because there is the priority to feelings. The emotion of love is inherent in each type of Devotion. So, with the practical form of Devotion primarily involving actions becomes devotion of sentiments if the sentiment is completed with action.

Some of the devotees regard the hearing as Satsang, Congregational singing as worship and remembering as meditation; because all there are co-related with them. So all these three have been described as combining them in a group. Here also just like to water the root of the tree, the 'Satsang' is the sustainer of chanting and meditation. To practise of anyone of the three, the Lord can be attained, as by hearing Parikshit etc., by chanting Narad etc., and by remembrance Prahlad etc., attained the Lord; then, where does the question of doubt arise to attain the Lord by the practice of all the three as combined?

In the same way, the service of the feet, obeisance and worship all the three are combined together; because

the service, adoration and salutation to the feet of the Lord—all these three are specially related to the feet. To follow anyone of the three, the Lord can be attained as by feet service, the boatman etc., by worship Prithu etc., and by obeisance Akrur etc., attained the Lord; so there is no question of doubt to attain the Lord by following all the three together.

In the same way the servitude attitude the attitude of friendliness and self-sacrificing attitude—all the three are worth practising with related mind; that is why all these three are co-related. All the three attitudes can be together as well as separately also. With anyone of these attitudes even, the Lord can be attained, as by the slavish attitude Hanuman etc., by the friendly attitude Arjun etc., and by the self surrendering attitude Bali etc., have attained the Lord; then if the Devotion is performed with all the attitudes together there will be no place for doubt in attaining the Lord.

So we should perform the Devotion of the Lord with great love and Devotion without any motive, earnestly and enthusiastically.



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